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THE

LIFE OF MAHOMET

AND

HISTORY OF ISLAM,

TO THE ERA OF THE HEGIRA.

WITH INTRODUCTORY CHAPTERS ON THE ORIGINAL SOURCES FOR THE BIOGRAPHY OF MAHOMET, AND ON THE PRE-ISLAMITE HISTORY OF ARABIA.

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BY

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PREFACE.

It may be necessary to mention that this History, in a slightly different form, has already appeared in a series of articles published in the *Calcutta Review*.

The work was undertaken, and the study of Oriental authorities first entered upon, at the instance of the Rev. C. G. Pfander, D.D., so well known as a Christian apologist in the controversy with the Mahometans,*—who urged that a biography of the Prophet of Islam, suitable for the perusal of his followers, should be compiled in the Hindoostanee language, from the early sources acknowledged by themselves to be authentic and authoritative.

I had at first hoped that some one of the existing biographies, with certain modifications and adaptations, would, when translated, answer for this pur-

* The Archbishop of Canterbury has lately acknowledged the obligations of the English Church to this distinguished foreigner, for his labours in this department, by conferring on him the degree of Doctor of Divinity.

pose, but as my study of the original sources advanced, and the field of enquiry expanded, I found that there was no treatise, either in English or in any of the continental languages, entirely adapted for the end in view. The authorities to which I had access, were more complete and authentic than any available in Europe; while the work of Dr. SPRENGER, which came out as I was pursuing my studies, appeared to me (as I have shown in some passages of this treatise) to proceed upon erroneous assumptions, both as to the state of Arabia prior to Mahomet, and the character of the Prophet himself. Thus the want of a complete and suitable biography insensibly led me on to the compilation of the materials which I now venture to lay, in a digested form, before the public.

The original works from which I have drawn, —their character and authority,—are discussed in an introductory chapter.

A second chapter of the Introduction has been devoted to a consideration of the bearing of the remote and patriarchal history of the Peninsula on the subsequent narrative. A third reviews the pre-islamite state of Arabia, as gathered from Mussulman tradition. The fourth enters into a detailed account of Mecca during the century preceding the birth of Mahomet.

The first and second chapters of the main work bring down the life of the Prophet to his fortieth

year. In the third, I have ventured to discuss that which forms the grand difficulty of my subject,—the claim advanced by Mahomet to inspiration. I have done this, I trust, with the combined caution and freedom which the obscurity and the importance of the question demand. The fourth, fifth, and sixth chapters carry on the Biography, together with the progress of Islam, to the era of the Hegira. In each chapter, I have sought to illustrate the statements of tradition by the contemporaneous revelations* of the Coran. A concluding chapter is devoted to the relation borne by Islam to Christianity.

In commending my work to favourable consideration, I will only add that it has been written amid the engrossing avocations of official business; and that the reader must not, therefore, look for that elaborate research and completeness of disquisition which, under other circumstances, he might have been justified in expecting. It should be recollected, too, that the facilities for consulting works of occidental learning are, in these remote parts of India, rare and imperfect.

In regard to the orthography of names, it has been my principle to preserve unchanged, words already naturalised in our language. Thus I write

* It may be proper to explain, once for all, that, for the sake of brevity, I use the word "revelation," for "pretended," or "imagined revelation."

Mecca, not *Makka;* Caliph, not *Khalîfa;* Mahomet, not *Muhammad.* There is in this course, the additional advantage as regards the latter word, that Mahomet is thus distinguished from other men of the name of Muhammad.

In other respects, I have endeavoured to adopt an uniform system of orthography, without pressing it to an awkward or inconvenient extreme. The following is the ordinary rendering of certain letters:—

ث	is represented by	*th*	ض	is represented by	*dh*
ج	„	„ *j*	ظ	„	„ *tz*
خ	„	„ *kh*	ع	by a sharp accent, (but not uniformly,) thus á, ó	
ذ	„	„ *dz*	غ	„	„ *gh*
ز	„	„ *z*	ق	„	„ *c* or *ck*
			ك	„	„ *k*

I have not thought it necessary to descend to farther discrimination, which would have confused and disfigured my pages.

I must record the deep obligations under which I lie to Dr. Sprenger, not only for the valuable materials presented in his Biography of the Prophet, but for his ready assistance in directing me to the manuscripts of Wâckidi, Hishâmi, and Tabari.

The original MSS. of the Kâtib al Wâckidi and Tabari are now in my hands. I had hoped to place the manuscript of the Katib al Wâckidi (as well as

copies of Tabari and Hishâmi, written so as to correspond with the originals, and with the references throughout this book,) in one of the Public Libraries in England. But I find that the owner is unwilling to part with the original MS. on any terms. He says it is *Wacf*, or property devoted to sacred purposes. I entertain a hope that the Calcutta Asiatic Society, or some other association devoted to Oriental learning, may be able to undertake the publication of this most interesting manuscript. A fac simile of the clear and ancient writing would be the most accurate and useful form of publication.

AGRA,

2nd January, 1857.

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INTRODUCTION.

CHAPTER FIRST.

Sources for the Biography of Mahomet.—The Coran, and Tradition.

Ancient story legendary, traditional, or contemporary.

THE confidence reposed in the stories of former times varies with the medium through which they have been handed down. The exploits of Hercules carry less conviction than the feats of the heroes of Troy; while, again, the wanderings of Ulysses, and the adventures of the early founders of Rome, are regarded with incomparably less trust than the history of the Peloponessian war, or the fortunes of Julius Cæsar. Thus there are three great divisions of ancient narrative. Legendary tales are based upon evanescent materials, and it is often doubtful whether they shadow forth abstract principles or real facts. Tradition, and the rhapsodies of bards, have for their object actual or supposed events; but the impression of these events is liable to become distorted, from the imperfection of the vehicle which conveys them to posterity. It is to the contemporary historian alone, or to history deriving its facts from contemporary records, that the mind accords a reliance which, proportioned to the means and the fidelity of the writer, may rise to absolute certainty.

The evidence of early Islam belongs to all three classes.

The narrative which we now possess of the origin of Islam does not belong exclusively to any one of these classes. It is *legendary*, for it contains multitudes of wild myths, such as the "Light of Mahomet," and the Cleansing of his Heart. It is *traditional*, since the main material of the story is oral recitation, not

recorded until Islam had attained to a full growth. But it possesses also some of the elements of *History*, because there are contemporary records of undoubted authenticity, to which we can still refer. Moreover, Moslem Tradition is of a peculiar and systematic character, and in some respects carries an authority not claimable by common tradition.

From these heterogeneous and incoherent materials it might be supposed difficult, and often impossible, to extract a uniform and consistent account of the Arabian Prophet, the various points of which shall be supported by sufficient evidence or probability. It will be my attempt, in the present chapter, to elucidate this topic; to enquire into the available sources for such a narrative; and the degree of credit to which they are severally entitled.

Sources specified.

We have two main treasuries from which may be drawn materials for tracing the life of Mahomet and the first rise of Islam. These are the CORAN, and the TRADITIONS of the two first centuries. Two minor classes may be added, namely, contemporary documents, and Arab poetry: but these have been, for the most part, transmitted by Tradition, and may with propriety be treated as coming under the same head.

Subject of this chapter: —their absolute and comparative value.

What dependence, then, can be placed on these sources? What is their individual merit as furnishing historical evidence? and what their comparative value, in relation to each other? To the solution of these questions, we shall now address ourselves.

THE CORAN. In what manner preserved in writing during Mahomet's lifetime.

The CORAN consists exclusively of the revelations or commands which Mahomet professed, from time to time, to receive through Gabriel, as a message direct from God; and which, under an alleged divine direction, he delivered to those about him.* At the

* According to the strict Mahometan doctrine every syllable of the Coran is of a directly divine origin. The wild rhapsodical Suras first composed by Mahomet (as the xci, c, cii, ciii) do not at all bear marks of such an assumption, and were not probably intended to be clothed in the dress of a message from the Most High, which characterizes the rest of the Coran. But when Mahomet's die was cast (the turning point in his career) of assuming that great name as the Speaker of his revelations, then these earlier Suras also came to be regarded as emanating directly from the Deity. Hence it arises that Mahometans rigidly include *every word* of the Coran, at whatever stage delivered, in the catagory of *Câl allâhu*, or "Thus

time of pretended inspiration, or shortly after, each passage was recited by Mahomet before the Companions or followers who happened to be present, and was generally committed to writing by some one amongst them,* upon palm-leaves, leather, stones, or such other rude material as conveniently came to hand. These divine messages continued throughout the three-and-twenty years of his prophetical life, so that the last portion did not appear till the year of his death. The canon was then closed; but the contents were never, during the Prophet's life-time, systematically arranged, or even collected together. We have no certain knowledge how the originals were preserved. That there did not exist any special depository for them, is evident from the mode in which, after Mahomet's death, the various fragments had to be sought for. Much of the Coran possessed only a temporary interest, arising out of circumstances which soon ceased to be important; and it seems to be doubtful whether the Prophet intended passages of this nature for public worship, or even for eventual currency.† Such portions it is little likely he would take any pains to

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saith the Lord." And it is one of their arguments against our Scriptures, that they are not entirely cast in the same mould;—not exclusively oracles from the mouth, and spoken in the person, of God.

* In the latter part of his career, the Prophet had many Arabic amanuenses; some of them occasional, as Ali and Othmân; others official as Zeid ibn Thâbit, who learned Hebrew expressly to conduct such business at Medîna as Mahomet had, in that language. In the Kâtib al Wâckidi's collection of despatches, the writers of the original documents are mentioned, and they amount to fourteen. Some say there were four-and-twenty of his followers whom Mahomet used more or less as scribes; others, as many as forty-two. *Weil's Mohammed*, p. 350. In his early Meccan life, he could not have had these facilities; but even then his wife Khadija, Waraca, Ali, or Abu Bacr, who could all read, might have recorded his revelations. At Medîna, Obey ibn Kab is mentioned as one who used to record the inspired recitations of Mahomet. *Kâtib al Wâckidi*, p. 277½. Another, Abdallah ibn Sad, was excepted from the Meccan amnesty, because he had falsified the revelation *dictated* to him by the Prophet. *Weil's Mohammed*, p. 348.

It is also evident that the revelations were recorded, because they are called frequently throughout the Coran itself, *Kitâb, i.e.* "the Writing," "Scriptures."

† Weil holds the opinion that Mahomet either destroyed or gave away these parts of his revelations (*Mohammed*, p. 349, note 549); and that great

preserve. Whether he retained under his own eye and custody the more important parts, we have no indication; perhaps he regarded them as sufficiently safe in the current copies, guarded by the almost miraculous tenacity of the Arab memory. The later, and the more important, revelations were probably left with the scribes who recorded them, or laid up in the habitation of some one of the Prophet's wives.* However this may have been,

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portions have thus been lost (p. 351). He farther holds, that the Prophet did not *intend* that the *abrogated* passages should continue to be inserted in the Coran. *Einleitung*, p. 46. But this, (except possibly in a few isolated cases) cannot be admitted; for Mahomet lost no opportunity of impressing on his people that every passage of his Revelation, whether superseded or not, was a direct message from God, to be reverentially preserved and repeated. The cancelled passages are so frequent, and so inwrought into the substance and context of the Coran, that we cannot doubt that it was the practice of Mahomet and of his followers during his life-time to repeat the whole, including the abrogated passages, as at present. Had *he* excluded them in his recitation, we may be sure that his followers also would have done so. It is to be remembered that Mahomet, who always, when present, led the public devotions, repeated a portion of the Coran at each celebration of public worship.

*The later revelations are much more uniform than the earlier, and their connection less broken and fragmentary. This may have resulted in part from the greater care taken of them as supposed in the text, though no doubt in part also from the style of composition being more regular and less rhapsodical.

There is a tradition that Abdallah ibn Masûd wrote down a verse from Mahomet's mouth, and next morning found it erased from the paper; which the prophet explained by saying, that it had been recalled to heaven. *Maracci* ii. 42; *Weil's Mohammed*, p. 382. The presumption from this is that the leaves remained with Mahomet. In later traditions, the incident is told with the miraculous addition that the erasure occurred simultaneously in the copies of a number of Mahomet's followers. *Geschichte der Chalifen*, i. 168. This, of course, is a fabrication; and we must believe that (if there be any truth in the tradition at all) the erasure occurred in the original *whilst in Mahomet's own keeping.*

If the originals were retained by Mahomet, they must needs have been in the custody of one of his wives; since at Medîna the prophet had no special house of his own, but dwelt by turns in the abode of each of his wives. As Omar committed his exemplar to the keeping of his daughter Haphsa, one of the widows of Mahomet, may it not have been in imitation of the prophet's own practice? The statement made by Sale (*Prelim. Disc.* p. 77,) that the fragmentary revelations were cast promiscuously into a chest, does not seem to be borne out by any good authority.

it is very certain that, when Mahomet died, there was nowhere any deposit of the complete series of original transcripts, and it seems doubtful whether the original transcripts themselves were then generally in existence.

Committed also to memory by the early Moslems;

But the preservation of the Coran during the life-time of Mahomet was not dependent on any such uncertain archives. The divine revelation was the corner-stone of Islam. The recital of a passage formed an essential part of every celebration of public worship; and its private perusal and repetition was enforced as a duty and a privilege, fraught with the richest religious merit. This is the universal voice of early tradition, and may be gathered from the revelation itself. The Coran was accordingly committed to memory more or less by *every* adherent of Islam, and the extent to which it could be recited was reckoned one of the chief distinctions of nobility in the early Moslem empire.* The custom of Arabia favored the task. Passionately fond of poetry, yet possessed of but limited means and skill in committing to writing the effusions of their bards, the Arabs had long been habituated to imprint them on the living tablets of their hearts. The recollective faculty was thus cultivated to the highest pitch; and it was applied, with all the ardour of an awakened Arab spirit, to the Coran. Such was the tenacity of their memory, and so great their power of application, that several of Mahomet's followers, according to early tradition, could, during his life-time, repeat with scrupulous accuracy the entire revelation.†

* Thus among a heap of warrior martyrs, he who had been the most versed in the Coran was honored with the first burial. The person who in any company could most faithfully repeat the Coran, was of right entitled to be the *Imâm*, or conductor of the public prayers (a post closely connected with that of government,) and to pecuniary rewards. Thus, after the usual distribution of the spoils taken on the field of Cadesia, A. H. 14, the residue was divided among those who knew most of the Coran. *Caussin de Perc. Hist. des Arabes* iii. p. 486.

† The Kâtib al Wackidi mentions four or five such persons. Several others are specified who were very nearly able to repeat the whole, before Mahomet's death. pp. 172, 270.

In speaking according to Mahometan idiom of "the entire revelation," I mean of course that which was preserved and current in Mahomet's later days, exclusive of what may possibly have been lost, destroyed, or become obsolete.

but not in any fixed order of parts.

We are not, however, to assume that the entire Coran was at this period repeated in a fixed order. The present compilation, indeed, is held by the Moslems to follow the arrangement prescribed by Mahomet; and early tradition might appear to imply some known sequence.* But this cannot be admitted; for had any fixed order been observed or sanctioned by the Prophet, it would unquestionably have been preserved in the subsequent collection. Now the Coran, as handed down to our time, follows in the disposition of its several parts no intelligible arrangement whatever, either of subject or time; and it is inconceivable that Mahomet should have enjoined its recital invariably in this concatenation. We must even doubt whether the number of the Suras, or chapters, was determined by Mahomet as we now have them.† The internal sequence at any rate of the contents of the several Suras cannot, in most cases, have been that which was en-

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* Thus, the secretary of Wâckidi mentions a few of the companions, who could repeat the whole Coran in a *given time*, which would seem to imply some usual connection of the parts; but the original tradition may have referred to the portions only which were commonly used by Mahomet in public worship, and these may have followed, both in copying and repetition from memory, some understood order; or more likely the tradition refers to a later period when the order had been fixed by Omar's compilation, and by a common error has been referred to an earlier date. There was no fixed order observed (as in the regular course of "Lessons" in Christian churches) in the portions of the Coran recited at the public prayers. The selection of a passage was dependent on the will and choice of the Imâm. Thus Abu Hureira one day took credit to himself for remembering which Sura the Prophet had read the day before. *Kâtib al Wâckidi*, p. 173½. On urgent occasions (as on that of Omar's assassination), a short Sura used to be read. It is only in *private* recitals that the whole, or large portions of the Coran, are said to have been recited consecutively.

The common idea of the Mahometans that the Coran was fixed by Mahomet as we have it now, originates in the tradition that Gabriel had an annual recitation of the whole Coran with their Prophet, as well as in the desire to augment the authority of their present edition.

† But there is reason to believe that the chief of the Suras, including all the passages in most common use, were so fixed and known by some name or distinctive mark. Some of them are spoken of, in early and well authenticated traditions as referred to by Mahomet himself. Thus he recalled his followers from Medîna, at the discomfiture of Honein, by shouting to them as "the men of the *Sura Bacr*" ("the cow.")

forced by the Prophet. The chaotic mingling of subjects, ever and anon disjoined as well by chronology as by the sense;—a portion produced at Medîna sometimes immediately preceding a passage revealed long before at Mecca; a command placed directly after a later one which cancels or modifies it; or an argument suddenly disturbed by the interjection of a sentence utterly foreign to its purport; all this forbids us to believe that the present, or indeed any complete, arrangement was in use during Mahomet's life-time.

The fragments from which the Coran was compiled, are exactly as Mahomet composed them.

On the other hand, there does not appear reason to doubt that several at least of the Suras are precisely the same, both in matter and order, as Mahomet left them;* and that the remainder, though often resembling a mosaic of various material, rudely dove-tailed together, is yet composed of genuine fragments, generally of considerable size, and each for the most part, following the connection in which it was recited at the public prayers, and committed to memory or to paper from the mouth of the Prophet by the

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Several persons are stated in the traditions to have learnt by heart a *certain number of Suras* in Mahomet's life-time. Thus Abdallah ibn Masûd learned seventy Suras from the Prophet's own mouth, *Kâtib al Wâckidi*, p. 169½; and Mahomet on his death bed repeated seventy Suras, "among which were the seven long ones." *Id.* p. 124½. These appear to be good traditions, and signify a recognized division of at least a part of the revelation into Suras, if not a usual order in repeating the Suras themselves.

Weil has a learned note (*Mohammed*, p. 361) on the meaning of the word "Sura," as used by Mahomet. It was probably at first employed to designate any portion of his revelation, or a string of verses; but it soon afterwards, even during Mahomet's life-time, acquired its present technical meaning.

*Where whole Suras were revealed at once, this would naturally be the case; but short passages in driblets, and often single verses, were given forth at a time, as occasion required. With regard to these, it is asserted in some traditions that Mahomet used to direct his amanuensis to enter them in such and such a Sura, or rather "in the Sura which treated of such and such a subject," في سورة التي يذكر فيها كذا *Mishcat* i. p. 526; *see also the Persian Commentary.* This, if an authentic tradition (and it is probably founded on fact), would indicate that Mahomet wished the Coran to be arranged according to its matter, and not chronologically.

The traditions cited above as to the *number* of Suras which some of the Companions could repeat, and which Mahomet himself repeated on his death-bed, imply the existence of such Suras in a complete and finished form.

earliest Moslems.* The irregular interposition and orderless disposal of the smaller fragments have indeed frequently destroyed the sequence, and produced a perplexing confusion. Still, the fact remains, that the fragments themselves were Mahomet's own composition, and were learned or recorded under his instructions; and this fact stamps the Coran, not merely as formed out of the Prophet's *words* and *sentences*, but to a large extent as his in relation to the *context* likewise.

Ability to write common among the early Moslems both of Mecca and Medîna.

However retentive the Arab memory, we should still have regarded with distrust a transcript made entirely from that source. But there is good reason for believing that many fragmentary copies, embracing amongst them the whole Coran, or nearly the whole, were made by Mahomet's followers during his life. Even if we admit that writing had been but lately introduced into Mecca,† it was without doubt generally known there long before

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* Anecdotes are told of some, who in reciting the Coran used, especially when tired, to pass over passages from the similar termination of the verses; and of others, who having been guilty of the omission, could spontaneously correct themselves. Such *homoioteleuta* are of very frequent recurrence, from the rhythm of the verses being formed by the repetition of common place phrases at their close, such as the attributes of God, &c. The anecdotes certainly suppose a settled order of the parts repeated; and though the period referred to is subsequent to Mahomet's death, yet the habit of such connected repetition was most probably formed during his life-time, and before the collection into one volume.

† De Sacy and Caussin de Perceval concur in fixing the date of the introduction of Arabic writing into Mecca at A.D. 560. *Mém. de l'Acad.* vol. l. p. 306; *C. de Perc.* i. p. 294. The chief authority is contained in a tradition given by Ibn Khallicân, that the Arabic system was invented by Morâmir at Anbar, whence it spread to Hira. It was thence, shortly after its invention, introduced into Mecca by Harb, father of Abû Sofiân the great opponent of Mahomet. *Ibn Khallicân, by Slane*, vol. ii. p. 284 [480]. Other traditions give a later date; but M. C. de Perceval reconciles the discrepancy by referring them rather to the subsequent arrival of some zealous and successful teacher, than to the first introduction of the art. Vol. i. p. 295.

I would observe that either the above traditions are erroneous, or that some sort of writing other than Arabic must have been known long before the date specified, *i. e.* A.D. 560. Abd al Muttalib is described as *writing* from Mecca to his maternal relatives at Medîna for help, in his younger days

Mahomet assumed his prophetical office. Many of his followers are expressly mentioned as employed by the Prophet at Medîna in writing his letters or despatches. And, though himself delighting in the title of the "Illiterate Prophet," and abstaining by necessity or design from the use of penmanship, he by no means looked with a jealous eye upon the art. Some of the poorest Meccan captives taken at Badr were offered their release on condition that they would teach a certain number of the ignorant citizens of Medîna to write.* And although the people of Medîna were not so generally educated as the Meccans, yet many of them also are distinctly noticed as having been able to write before Islam.† The ability being thus possessed, it may be safely inferred that what was so indefatigably committed to memory, would be likewise committed carefully to writing.

Transcripts of portions of the Coran common among the early Moslems;

We also know that when a tribe first joined Islam, Mahomet was in the habit of deputing one or more of his followers to teach

i.e. about A.D. 520. And still farther back, in the middle of the fifth century, Cussei addressed a *written* demand of a similar tenor to his brother in Arabia Petræa. *Kâtib al Wâckidi*, 11½; *Tabari* 18 & 28.

The Himyar or *Musnad* writing is said by Ibn Khallicân to have been confined to Yemen; but the verses quoted by C. de Perceval (vol. i. p. 295) would seem to imply that it had at one period been known and used by the Meccans, and was in fact *supplanted* by the Arabic. The Syriac and Hebrew were also known, and probably extensively used in Medîna and the northern parts of Arabia from a remote period.

In fine, whatever the system employed may have been, it is evident that writing of some sort was known and practised at Mecca long before A.D. 560. At all events, the frequent notices of written papers leave no room to doubt that Arabic writing was well known, and not uncommonly practised, there in Mahomet's early days. I cannot think with Weil, that any great "want of writing materials" could have been felt, even "by the poorer Moslems in the early days of Islam." *Mohammed*, p. 350. Reeds and palm-leaves would never be wanting.

* Thus the *Kâtib al Wâckidi*, p. 101½, relates:—"Now the people of Mecca were able to write, but those of Medîna were unaccustomed to the art. Wherefore, when the captives could not pay any ransom, the Prophet made over to each of them ten of the lads of Medîna, and when these lads became expert in writing, that stood for the ransom of the captives."

† Thus, to cite one of a score of instances, "Abu Abbas used to write Arabic before the rise of Islam, while as yet writing was rare among the Arabs." *Kâtib al Wâckidi*, p. 269.

them the Coran and the requirements of his religion. We are frequently informed that they carried *written* instructions with them on the latter point, and it is natural to conclude that they would provide themselves also with transcripts of the more important parts of the Revelation, especially those upon which the ceremonies of Islam were founded, and such as were usually recited at the public prayers.* Besides the references in the Coran itself to its own existence in a written form, we have express mention made, in the authentic traditions of Omar's conversion, of a copy of the twentieth Sura being used by his sister's family for social and private devotional reading.† This refers to a period preceding, by three or four years, the emigration to Medîna. If transcripts of the revelation were made, and in common use, at that early time, when the followers of Islam were few and oppressed, it seems a sure deduction that they multiplied exceedingly when the Prophet came to power, and his Book formed the law of the greater part of Arabia.

but incomplete and fragmentary.

It is perhaps hardly necessary to add that the limitations already applied to the Coran as committed to memory, must be equally understood here. The transcripts were mere fragmentary copies compiled, if compiled at all, with little or no reference to concatenation of subject and date. The Suras chiefly used in

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*A curious illustration of this is given in the case of the despatch and embassy to the Himyarites;—the Prophet's ambassador, Harith ibn Abi Rabia, among other things was told to direct them to "translate," (perhaps "explain") ترجموا the Coran, when they recited it in a foreign tongue or dialect. *Kâtib al Wâckidi*, p. 55.

Abdallah ibn Abbâs is mentioned as a good "translator" (perhaps "explainer") of the Coran. *Ib.* p. 174.

† I have before alluded to the evidence conveyed by the name "Kitâb." Other passages involve the existence of copies in common use. "The Coran, ... none shall touch the same, excepting such as are cleah." *Sura* lvi. 80. This is an *early* Meccan Sura, and the passage was referred to by the sister of Omar when at his conversion he desired to take her copy of Sura xx. into his hands. Such passages are not only evidence of the extreme care, if not awe, with which all transcripts of the Coran were treated, but they themselves served as an important safeguard against corruption. The account of this transaction may be referred to below, in the 5th Chapter of this work.

public worship, or the most favourite and meritorious for private perusal and recitation, would be those of which the greatest number of copies existed. Transcripts of the earlier Suras, and of those of evanescent interest, even if extant, would be few in number.*

State of the Coran up to a year after Mahomet's death.

Such was the condition of the text of the Coran during Mahomet's life, and such it remained for about a year after his death, imprinted upon the hearts of his people, and fragmentary copies of it increasing daily. These sources would correspond closely with each other; for the Coran, even in the Prophet's life-time, was regarded with a superstitious awe as containing the very words of God himself; so that any variations would be reconciled by a direct reference to Mahomet, † and after his death to the originals where they existed, or to the transcripts and the memory of the Prophet's confidential friends and amanuenses.

The Coran collected, A.H. 11, by Zeid; whose text was authoritative during the Caliphates of Abu Bakr and Omar.

It was not till the overthrow of Moseilama, when a great carnage took place amongst the Moslems at Yemâma,‡ and large numbers of the best reciters of the Coran were slain, that a misgiving first arose in Omar's mind as to the uncertainty and embarrassment which would be experienced regarding the text, when all those who had received it from the original source, and

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* Those revelations, however, must be excepted which related to individuals. Such passages as praised or exculpated specified persons, would be most carefully treasured up by the persons to whom they referred and by their families, however little interest they might possess for any one else;—*e.g.* the verses in Sura xxiv. regarding Ayesha; and Sura ix. 120, respecting Kab ibn Mâlik and others, who were pardoned for not accompanying the Tabûk expedition.

† See instances of such references made to Mahomet by Omar, Abdallah ibn Masûd, and Obey ibn Kab, at pp. 521 & 522, vol. i. of the *Mishcât*, *Eng. Translation.*

‡ The exact date of the battle of Yemâma is uncertain. Wâckidi makes it to fall in Rabî I. A.H. 12, or one year after Mahomet's death, and Abu Mashar follows him. Tabari mentions the 11th year of the Hegira, and others give the *end* of that year. The latter opinion is the likeliest, as Khalid set out for Irâk after the battle, and in the beginning of A.H. 12. Weil would place it in Shabân of A.H. 11, or only about five months after Mahomet's death, which apparently leaves too little time for the intervening transactions. *Weil's Gesch. der Chalifen* i. p. 27; *Kâtib al Wâckidi*, p. 195.

thence stored it in their memories, should have passed away. "I fear," said he, addressing the Caliph Abu Bacr, "that the slaughter may again wax hot amongst the repeaters of the Coran, in other fields of battle; and that much may be lost therefrom.* Now, therefore, my advice is, that thou shouldest give speedy orders for the collection of the Coran." Abu Bacr agreed, and thus made known his wishes to Zeid ibn Thâbit, an *Adjutor* or convert of Medîna, and one of the Prophet's amanuenses,—"Thou art a young man, and wise; against whom no one amongst us can cast an imputation; and thou wert wont to write down the inspired revelations of the Prophet of the Lord. Wherefore now search out the Coran, and bring it all together." So new and unexpected was the enterprise, that Zeid at first shrank from it, and doubted the propriety, or even lawfulness, of attempting that which Mahomet had neither himself done nor commanded to be done. At last he yielded to the joint entreaties of Abu Bacr and Omar, and seeking out the fragments of the Coran from every quarter, "gathered it together, from date-leaves, and tablets of white stone, and from the breasts of men."† By the labours of Zeid,

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* فيذهب كثير من القران *Vide Mishcât*, vol. i. p. 524, *Eng. Translation*, Bk. VIII. ch. iii. pt. 3.

† فكتبت القران اجمعه من العسب و اللخاف و صدور الرجال. — عسب properly signifies branches of the date-tree, on which there are no leaves; it appears, however, here to mean date-*leaves*. لخاف signifies *thin white stones*. The commentary on this passage adds traditions to the effect that Zeid gathered the Coran also from "fragments of parchment or paper," الرقاع, and "pieces of leather," طبع الاديم, and "the shoulder and rib bones of camels and goats," الاكتاف و الاضلاع. *Mishcât, as above.*

Leather was frequently used for writing. Many of Mahomet's treaties and letters are mentioned as recorded on it. Sometimes *red* leather is specified. *Kâtib al Wâckidi*, p. 59. There is a curious tradition regarding a man who used a leather letter received from Mahomet, for the purpose of mending his bucket, and whose family were thence called the *Bani Rackî*—"children of the *mender*," or "*cobbler*;" *Ibid*, p. 54.

these scattered and confused materials were reduced to the order and sequence in which we now find them, and in which it is pretended that Zeid used to repeat the Coran in the presence of Mahomet. The original copy prepared by Zeid appears to have been kept by Abu Bacr during the short remainder of his reign. It then came into the possession of Omar, who committed it to the custody of his daughter Haphsa, one of the Prophet's widows. The compilation of Zeid, as copied out in this exemplar, continued during the ten years' caliphate of Omar to be the standard and authoritative text.*

Recension in the Caliphate of Othmân, (some time after A.H. 88;)

But variety of expression either originally prevailed in the previous transcripts and modes of recitation, or soon crept into the copies which were made from Zeid's edition. Mussulmans were scandalized. The Coran sent down by the Lord was ONE, but if there were several varying texts, where was its unity? Hodzeifa, who had warred both in Armenia and Adzerbâijan, and had observed the different readings of the Syrians and of the men of Irâc, was alarmed at the number and extent of the variations, and warned Othmân to interpose, and "stop the people, before they should differ regarding their scriptures, as did the Jews and Christians."† The Caliph was persuaded, and to remedy the evil had recourse again to Zeid, with whom he associated a jury of three Coreishites.‡ The original copy of the first edition was

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* This consistent account is derived from the traditions in the *Mishcât*. The authorities in the *Kâtib al Wâckidi* vary. Abu Bacr is said to have been "the first who collected the Coran into one book," p. 216. "He died before he had collected the Coran" (probably it is meant "*finished* the collection,") p. 219½.

Again, in regard to Omar it is said:—"Omar was the first to collect the Coran into one volume." This must refer to Abu Bacr's collection, here ascribed to Omar, because made at his suggestion, p. 234½. Again, at page 237, we read, that "he died before he had collected the Coran." This may probably be a loose mode of intimating that his was not the *final* collection.

† ادرك هذا الامة قبل ان يختلفوا فى الكتاب اختلاف اليهود و النصاري*

‡ Zeid, it will be remembered, was a native of Medina.

obtained from Haphsa's depository, and a careful recension of the whole set on foot. In case of difference between Zeid and his coadjutors, the voice of the latter, as demonstrative of the Coreishite idiom, was to preponderate; and the new collation was thus assimilated to the Meccan dialect, in which the Prophet had given utterance to his inspiration.* Transcripts were multiplied and forwarded to the chief cities in the empire, and all the previously existing copies were, by the Caliph's command, committed to the flames.† The old original was returned to Haphsa's custody.

which remains unaltered to the present day.

The recension of Othmân has been handed down to us unaltered. So carefully, indeed, has it been preserved, that there are no variations of importance,—we might almost say no variations at all,—amongst the innumerable copies of the Coran scattered throughout the vast bounds of the empire of Islam. Contending and embittered factions, taking their rise in the murder of Othmân himself within a quarter of a century from the death of Mahomet, have ever since rent the Mahometan world. Yet but ONE CORAN has always been current amongst them; and the consentaneous use by all to the present day of the same scripture, is an irrefragable proof that we have now before us the very text prepared by the commands of the unfortunate Caliph.‡ There is probably in the

* It is one of the maxims of the Moslem world, supported perhaps by the revelation itself (see Sura xi. 2), that the Coran is incorruptible, and preserved from error and variety of reading, by the miraculous interposition of God himself. In order, therefore, to escape the scandal and inconsistency of the transaction here detailed, it is held that the Coran, as to its external dress, was revealed in seven dialects of the Arabic tongue. See traditions at p. 520, vol. i. of the *Mishcât;* and *Weil's Mohammed*, p. 349, note 551. It is not improbable that Mahomet himself may have originated or countenanced some idea of this kind, to avoid the embarrassment of differing versions of the *same* passages of revelation. See also *Weil's Einleitung*, p. 48.

† *Mishcât*, vol. i. p. 525. Wâckidi, however, mentions that *twelve* persons were employed by Othmân in this work, among whom were Obey ibn Kab and Zeid. The three Coreish noticed in the text were probably *umpires* from among the twelve. *Kâtib al Wâçkidi*, p. 278½.

‡ The Moslems would have us believe that some of the *self-same copies*, penned by Othmân or by his order, are still in existence. M. Quatremère has collected a number of facts bearing on this head. *Journal Asiatique, Juillet*, 1838, pp. 41, *et seq.* The very copy which the Caliph held in his

world no other work which has remained twelve centuries with so pure a text. The various readings are wonderfully few in number, and are chiefly confined to differences in the vowel points and diacritical signs. But these marks were invented at a later date. They did not exist at all in the early copies, and can hardly be said to affect the text of Othmân.*

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hand when he was murdered is said to have been preserved in the village of Antartus. Others hold that leaves of it were treasured up in the grand mosque of Cordova; and Edrisi describes in detail the ceremonies with which they were treated: they were finally transferred to Fez or Telemsan. Ibn Batûta, when in the fourteenth century he visited Basra, declares that this Coran was then in its mosque, and that the marks of the Caliph's blood were still visible at the words (Sura ii. v. 138), "God shall avenge thee against them." *Lee's translation*, p. 35. [The *Kâtib al Wâckidi*, p. 193, states that the unfortunate Caliph's blood ran down to these words.] Other of Othmân's originals are said to be preserved in Egypt, Morocco, and Damascus; as well as at Mecca and Medîna. The Medîna copy, it is said, has a note at the end, relating that it was compiled by the injunctions of Othmân; and the compilers' names are also given: *Cnf. Gayangos Spain*, vol. i. pp. 222—224, and 497, 498; and *Weil's Einleit*, p. 51. In Quatremére's conclusion that though the preservation of such copies is not impossible, yet the accounts on the subject are of doubtful authority, I am disposed to concur. It appears very unlikely that any of Othmân's copies can have escaped the innumerable changes of dynasty and party to which every part of the Moslem world has been subjected. Any very ancient copy would come, however unfounded the claim, to be called that of Othmân.

* There are, however, instances of variation in the letters themselves, and these are not confined to difference in the dots, as بشرا for نشرا (Sura vii. 58, and xxv. 49), تكلف for يكلف (iv. 83). They extend sometimes to the *form* of the letters also, as ضنين for ظنين (lxxxi. 23), صوف for صواف (xxii. 37.)

This almost incredible purity of text, in a book so widely scattered over the world, and continually copied by people of different tongues and lands, is without doubt owing mainly to Othmân's recension, and the official enforcement of his one edition. To countenance a various reading was an offence against the State, and punished as such. An instance may be found in *Weil's History of the Caliphs*, vol. ii. p. 676. Yet the various readings for which the learned Abul Hasan was persecuted, appear to have been very innocent and harmless to the government. We need not wonder that, when such means were resorted to, a perfect uniformity of text has been maintained. To compare (as the Moslems are fond of doing) *their* pure text, with the various readings of our Scriptures, is to compare things between the history and essential points of which there is no analogy.

I. Was the text of Othmân a faithful reproduction of the edition of Abu Bakr?

Since, then, we possess the undoubted text of Othmân's recension, it remains to be inquired whether that text was an honest re-production of Abu Bacr's edition, with the simple reconcilement of unimportant variations. There is the fullest ground for believing that it was so. No early or trustworthy traditions throw suspicion of unfair dealing upon Othmân.* The Shîahs, indeed, of later times, pretend

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* Weil, indeed, impugns Othmân's honesty, by saying that he committed the task not to the most learned men, but to those most devoted to himself; *Chalif.* i. p. 167. But he seems herein mistaken; for Wâckidi, as we have seen, holds that Othmân selected *twelve* men for the work, among whom was Obey ibn Kab as well as Zeid, the two best authorities living. Abdallah ibn Masûd, it is true, was vexed at Zeid being entrusted with the revision, and cast suspicions upon him, but this, as will be shown in the next note, was simple jealousy. Zeid was selected for the *first* compilation by Abu Bacr and Omar, and Othmân cannot be blamed for fixing upon the same person to revise it. The traditions regarding Zeid assign to him a high and unexceptionable character; *vide Kâtib al Wâckidi*, p. 172½, 173. He is spoken of as "the first man in Medîna for his judgment, decision, reading of the Coran, and legal knowledge, during the caliphates of Omar, Othmân, Ali, and until he died in Muâvia's reign."

The only tradition which imputes to Othmân any *change* is one in the *Mishcât* (i. p. 526), where the Caliph, being asked why he had joined Suras viii. and ix. without interposing the usual formula, "In the name of God, &c.," is said to have answered that "the Prophet, when dictating a passage, used to direct the scribe to write it in the Sura relating to such and such a subject; that Mahomet died before explaining the position of Sura ix. which was the last revealed; and that, as it resembled in subject Sura viii, he (Othmân) had joined them together without the intervening formula." Here certainly is no charge of corruption, or even of changing the position of any portion of the Coran, but simply a direction as to the form and heading with which one of the chapters should be entered. There is also a tradition from Dzahaby given by Weil (*Chalif.* i. p. 168, note), which apparently implies that, previous to Othmân's collection, the Coran, though arranged into Suras, was not brought together into one volume or series. "The Coran," it says, "was composed of books,—كتب—but Othmân left it *one* book." كتاب.

This would correspond with the principle regarding the two editions laid down in the commentary on the *Mishcât;*—"The difference between the collection of Abu Bacr and that of Othmân, is that the object of the former was to gather up everything, so that no portion should be lost; the object of the latter, to prevent any discrepancy in the copies." The former object *might* have been attained without arranging the Suras into a volume. Still, I incline to think that Abu Bacr did so arrange them.

that Othmân left out certain Suras or passages which favored Ali. But this is incredible. He could not possibly have done so without being observed at the time; and it cannot be imagined that Ali and his followers—not to mention the whole body of the Mussulmans who fondly regarded the Coran as the word of God—would have permitted such a proceeding.

Reasons for believing that it was so.

In support of this position, the following arguments may be adduced. *First.*—When Othmân's edition was prepared, no open breach had yet taken place between the Omeyads and the Alyites. The unity of Islam was still complete and unthreatened. Ali's pretensions were undeveloped. No sufficient object can, therefore, be assigned for the perpetration by Othmân of an offence which Moslems even then regarded as one of the blackest dye. *Second.*—On the other hand, Ali, from the very commencement of Othmân's reign, had an influential party of adherents, strong enough in the end to depose the Caliph, to storm his palace in the heart of Medîna, and to put an end to his life. Can we conceive that these men would have remained quiet, when the very evidence of their leader's superior claims was being openly expunged from the book of God? *Third.*—At the time of the recension, there were still multitudes alive who had the Coran, as originally delivered, by heart; and of the supposed passages favouring Ali—had any ever existed—there would have been numerous transcripts in the hands of his family and followers. Both of these sources must have proved an effectual check upon any attempt at suppression.* *Fourth.*—The party of Ali shortly after assumed

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* Weil supposes that Othmân threatened the severest punishments against those who did not burn all the old manuscripts. *Gesch der Chalifen*, i. p. 169, note. But we find in reality no trace of any such severity, or indeed of any inquisitorial proceedings at all. The new edition, and the destruction of former copies (though subsequently forming a convenient accusation against Othmân,) do not appear to have excited at the time any surprise or opposition.

The opposition and imprisonment of Abdallah ibn Masûd originated in his discontent and jealousy. That his Coran was burnt for its supposed errors (*Chalif.* i. p. 169,) is not supported by any good tradition; it was probably burnt with all the others, on the new edition being promulgated. The following is all that Wâckidi has upon it. A tradition runs thus:—"Abdallah ibn Masûd addressed us when the command was received regarding

an independent attitude, and he himself succeeded to the Caliphate. Is it possible that either Ali, or his party, when thus arrived at power, would have tolerated a mutilated Coran—mutilated expressly to destroy his claims? Yet we find that they followed one and the same Coran with their opponents, and raised not even the shadow of an objection against it.* The insurgents are indeed

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(the compilation or recension of) the Coran; and referring to the verse in the Coran reprobating robbery (of the booty, غلول Sura iii. 162,) he added, "And they have made secret robbery in the Coran; and certainly if I were to recite the Coran according to the reading of any other person whatever whom I might chance to select, it would be better in my opinion than the reading of Zeid. For, by the Lord! I received seventy Suras from the mouth of the Prophet himself, at a time when Zeid was but a curly-headed urchin playing with the children. Verily, if I knew any one more learned than myself in the book of the Lord, I would travel to him, were it never so far." *Kâtib al Wâckidi*, p. 169. These are the words evidently of a piqued and discontented man. Had there been any foundation for his calumny, we should undoubtedly have heard of it from other quarters.

* So far from objecting to Othmân's revision, Ali multiplied copies of his version. Quatremère, in the paper cited in a former note, among other MSS. supposed to have been written by Ali, mentions one which was preserved at Mesched Ali up to the fourteenth century, and which bore his signature. Some leaves of the Coran, said to have been copied by him, are now in the Lahore *Tosha-Khâna;* others in the same repository are ascribed to the pen of his son, Husein. Without leaning upon such uncertain evidence, it is abundantly sufficient for our argument that copies of Othmân's Coran were notoriously *used and multiplied by Ali's partizans*, and have been so uninterruptedly up to the present day.

There is a curious tradition in *Wâckidi* to the following effect:—"Ali delayed long to do homage to Abu Bacr, who happening to meet him asked, '*Art thou displeased with my being elected chief?*'—'*Nay,*' replied Ali, '*but I have sworn with an oath that I shall not put on my mantle, except for prayers, until I have collected the Coran.*' And it is thought that he wrote it (chronologically) according to its revelation." But it is at the same time admitted that nobody ever knew anything of such a collection; the traditionists add —"*Had that book reached us, verily there had been knowledge for us therein.*" *Kâtib al Wâckidi*, p. 168½. A similar tradition appears to be referred to by Weil (*Chalif.* i. p. 169, *note*). But the idea is preposterous, and is simply an invention to exculpate Ali from the charge of having done homage to Abu Bacr tardily. Had he really compiled a Coran of his own, we should have had multitudes of traditions about it. Besides, the notion, as already observed, is incompatible with his subsequent reception of Othmân's version.

said to have made it one of their complaints against Othmân that he had caused a new edition to be made of the Coran, and had committed all the old copies to the flames; but these proceedings were objected to simply as unauthorized and sacreligious. No hint was dropped of any alteration or omission. Such a supposition, palpably absurd at the time, is altogether an after-thought of the modern Shîas.

II. Was the edition of Abu Bakr a faithful copy of the revelations of Mahomet?

We may then safely conclude that Othmân's recension was, what it professed to be, a reproduction of Abu Bacr's edition, with a more perfect conformity to the Meccan dialect, and possibly a more uniform arrangement of its parts,—but still a faithful reproduction. The most important question yet remains, viz., *Whether Abu Bacr's edition was an authentic and complete collection of Mahomet's revelations.* The following considerations warrant the belief that it was authentic and, in the main, as complete as at the time was possible.

Reasons for believing that it was so. *First.*—The sincerity and faith of Abu Bakr and the early Moslems.

First.—We have no reason to doubt that Abu Bacr was a sincere follower of Mahomet, and an earnest believer in the divine origin of the Coran. His faithful attachment to the Prophet's person, conspicuous for the last twenty years of his life, and his simple, consistent, and unambitious deportment as Caliph, seem to admit no other supposition. Firmly believing the revelations of his dear friend to be the revelations of God himself, his natural object would be to secure a pure and complete transcript of them. A similar argument applies with almost equal force to Omar and the other agents in the revision. The great mass of Mussulmans were undoubtedly sincere, nay fanatical, in their belief. From the scribes themselves, employed in the compilation, down to the humblest believer who brought his little store of writing on stones or palm-leaves, all would be influenced by the same earnest desire to reproduce the very words which their Prophet had declared as

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Ali was moreover deeply versed in the Coran, and his memory (if tradition be true) would amply have sufficed to detect, if not to restore, any passage that had been tampered with. Ali said of himself, "there is not a verse in the Coran, of which I do not know the matter, the parties to whom it refers, and the place and time of its revelation, whether by night or by day, whether in the plains or upon the mountains." *Kâtib al Wâckidi*, 168.

his message from the Lord. And a similar guarantee existed in the feelings of the people at large, in whose soul no principle was more deeply rooted, than an awful reverence for the supposed word of God. The Coran itself contains frequent denunciations against those who should presume to "fabricate anything in the name of the Lord," as well as conceal any part of that which he had revealed. Such an action, represented as the worst description of crime, we cannot believe that the first Moslems, in the early ardour of their faith and love, ever dared to contemplate.*

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* *Vide* Coran, Sura vi. a. 21. ومن كان اظلم ممن افترى على الله كذبا او كذب بايآته انه لا يفلح الظالمون.—The same sentiment, in nearly the same words, is repeated in eleven other places.

The considerations above detailed seem sufficient to refute the supposition advanced by Dr. Weil (*Mohammed*, p. 350,) that Abu Bacr *might* have colluded with Zeid, or some other of the Prophet's scribes, and made them produce at pleasure scraps which Mahomet never gave forth, as portions of the Coran. The ONLY passage brought forward, as favouring this view, is that regarding the mortality of Mahomet, quoted (or, as Weil holds, fabricated) by Abu Bacr immediately after his death. The people were at the time frantic with grief, and refused to believe that their Prophet and their Ruler, whom a few hours before they had seen in the mosque apparently convalescent, and upon whom they hung for temporal guidance and for spiritual direction, was really dead. They persuaded themselves that he was only in a swoon, and would soon again return to consciousness, as from some heavenly journey. It was thus that when Abu Bacr sounded in their ears Mahomet's own words, in which (with reference to his perilous position in a field of battle) he had announced his mortality, they were bewildered, and "it was as if they had not known that this verse had been revealed, until Abu Bacr recited it; and the people took it up from him, and forthwith it was in all their mouths." Another relates—"By the Lord! it was so that when I heard Abu Bacr repeating this, I was horror-struck, my limbs shook, I fell to the earth, and I knew of a certainty that Mahomet was indeed dead." *Kâtib al Wâckîdi*, p. 155½; *Hishâmi*, p. 462. The whole circumstances appear natural and readily explicable by the highly excited feelings and wild grief of Omar and those who were with him. The traditions are throughout consistent with the Coran. Mahomet always contemplated death as awaiting him, and spoke of it as such. The tradition of his having declared that the choice of both worlds, (*i.e.* the option of death and transfer to paradise, or of continuance in this world,) was offered him is a fiction, or a highly-coloured exaggeration. Whatever expectations of a miraculous interference and resuscitation Mahomet's sudden decease may have excited, they were certainly warranted neither by the Coran nor by any

Second.—The compilation was made within two years of Mahomet's death.* We have seen that several of his followers had the entire revelation (excepting perhaps some obsolete fragments) by heart; that *every* Moslem treasured it up more or less in his memory; and that there were official reciters of it, for public worship and tuition, in all countries to which Islam extended. These formed an unbroken link, a living stereotype, between the revelation, fresh from Mahomet's lips, and the edition of it by Zeid. Thus the people were not only sincere and fervent in their desire for a faithful copy of the Coran; they were also in possession of ample means for realizing their wish, and for testing the accuracy and completeness of the volume placed by Abu Bacr in their hands.

Second.—The Coran, as delivered by Mahomet, was yet fresh in the memory of his followers.

Third.—A still greater security would be obtained from the fragmentary transcripts, which existed in Mahomet's life-time, and must have greatly multiplied before the Coran was thrown together. These were in the possession, probably, of all who could read. And as we know that the compilation of Abu Bacr came into immediate and unquestioned use, it is reasonable to conclude that it embraced and corresponded with every extant fragment; and *therefore*, by common consent, superseded them all. We hear of no fragments intentionally omitted by the compilers, nor of any that differed from the received edition. Had any such been discoverable, they would undoubtedly have been preserved and noticed in those traditional repositories which treasured up the minutest and most trivial acts and sayings attributed to the Prophet.

Third.—It must have corresponded with the numerous transcripts in the hands of the Moslems.

Fourth.—The contents and the arrangement of the Coran speak forcibly for its authenticity. All the fragments that could

Fourth.—There is internal evidence of the simplicity and faithfulness of the compilers.

speech of Mahomet. I entirely dissent from Weil, that there is any suspicion whatever of the verse repeated by Abu Bacr having been fabricated for the occasion. To me such suspicion appears to be gratuitous incredulity. *Cnf. Weil's Mohammed*, pp. 333, 350; his *Einleitung*, p. 43; and his *Gesch. der Chalifen*, vol. i. pp. 4 & 15.

* The battle of Yemâma, as before mentioned, occurred within a year after Mahomet's death. Abu Bacr's caliphate lasted little more than two years and two months. The compilation was certainly in progress, if not completed, between the former date and Abu Bacr's death.

possibly be obtained have evidently, with the most artless simplicity, been joined together. The patchwork bears no marks of a designing genius or a moulding hand. It clearly testifies to the faith and reverence of the compilers, and proves that they dared not do more than simply collect the sacred fragments and place them in juxta-position. Hence the interminable repetitions; the palling reiteration of the same ideas, the same truths, the same doctrines; hence the scripture stories and Arab legends, told over and over again with little verbal variation; hence the pervading want of connection, and the startling chasms between adjacent passages. Again, the confessions of Mahomet, and his frailties which it was sometimes expedient to represent as having been noticed by the Deity, are all with evident faithfulness entered in the Coran. Not less undisguised are the frequent verses which are contradicted or abrogated by later revelations.* The editor plainly contented himself with simply bringing together, and copying out in a continuous form with scrupulous accuracy, the fragmentary materials within his reach. He neither ventured to select from repeated versions of the same incident, nor to reconcile differences, nor by the alteration of a single letter to dove-tail abrupt transitions of context, nor by tampering with the text to soften discreditable appearances. Thus we possess every internal guarantee of confidence.

A recension of Abu Bakr's edition, why required.

But it may be objected,—If the text of Abu Bacr's Coran was pure and universally received, how came it to be so soon corrupted; —and to require, in consequence of its variations, an extensive recension? The traditions do not afford us sufficient light to determine decisively the cause of these discrepancies. They may have been owing to various readings in the older fragmentary transcripts, which remained in the possession of the people; they may have originated in the diverse dialects of Arabia, and the different modes of pronunciation and orthography; or they may

* Though the convenient doctrine of abrogation is acknowledged in the Coran, yet the Mussulmans endeavour as far as possible to explain away such contradictions. Still they are obliged to confess that the Coran contains no fewer than 225 verses cancelled by later ones.

have sprung up naturally, before a strict uniformity in all private manuscripts was officially enforced. It is sufficient for us to know that in Othmân's revision recourse was had to the *original* exemplar of the first compilation, and that we have otherwise every guarantee, internal and external, of possessing a text the same as that which Mahomet himself gave forth and used.*

* I have already referred to the Mahometan theory of *the seven dialects*, as possibly founded in part on some explanation given by Mahomet to account for two or more varying versions of the same text, both given forth by himself as divine. The idea, however, was probably not fully developed or worked into a systematic form till after his death, when it was required to account for the various readings.

Variety of readings in the originals might arise from two causes. *First.*—Passages actually distinct and revealed at different times might be so similar as to appear really *the same* with insignificant variations; and it is possible they might thus come to be confounded together, the differences being regarded as various readings. This, however, is opposed to the tautological character of the present Coran, which renders it likely that such passages were always inserted as separate and distinct revelations, without any attempt at collation or combination with other passages which they might closely resemble.

Second.—Different transcripts of one and the same passage might have variations of reading. It is *possible* that such transcripts might be *each* copied *in extenso* in Zeid's compilation as separate passages, and that hence may arise some part of the repetitions of the Coran. But from the care with which the *times* and *occasions* of the several revelations are said to have been noted and remembered, it seems more likely that such passages were inserted but once. How, then, were the various readings in the different transcripts of the same passage treated? Some, leaning on the dogma of the "seven dialects," suppose that they were *all* exhibited in Zeid's first collection. But this is very improbable. Zeid evidently made one version out of the whole. The various readings would thus remain with the possessors of the original transcripts.

We have then the following sources from which various readings may have crept into the *subsequent copies of Abu Bacr's version.* I. The variations in the private transcripts just referred to might have been gradually transferred to such copies. II. Differences, in the mode of repetition from memory, and peculiarities of dialect, might have been similarly transferred; or III. The manuscripts not being checked, as was afterwards done by Othmân's standard copy, would naturally soon begin to differ.

Variations, once introduced into what was regarded as the Word of God, acquired an authority, which could only be superseded by a general revision such as Othmân's, and by the authoritative decision of the Successor and Representative of the Prophet of the Lord.

The Coran may not contain some passages once revealed but subsequently cancelled or altered;

While, however, it is maintained that we now have the Coran *as it was left* by Mahomet, there is no ground for asserting that passages, once given forth as inspired, may not at some subsequent period have been changed or withdrawn *by the Prophet himself.* On the contrary, repeated examples of such withdrawal are noticed in the traditions; and alterations (although no express instances are given) seem to be clearly implied in the following early traditions:—

Omar praised Obey ibn Kab, and said that he was the most perfect repeater of the Coran. "We, indeed," he added, "are in the habit of omitting some portions included by Obey in his recitation. For Obey is wont to affirm,—'*I heard the Prophet saying so, and I omit not a single word entered in the Coran by the Prophet:*' whereas the fact is that parts of the book were revealed in the absence of Obey," (which cancel or alter some of the verses which he repeats.)*

Again,—Ibn Abbâs stated that he preferred the reading of Abdallah ibn Masûd;—"for Mahomet used to have the Coran repeated to him (by Gabriel) once every Ramazân; and in the year of his death it was twice repeated, and Abdallah was present (on both occasions) AND WITNESSED WHAT WAS REPEALED THEREOF, AND WHAT WAS CHANGED."†

The Coran itself recognizes the withdrawal of certain passages, after they had been given forth as a part of the Revelation;—"Whatever verses we cancel, or *cause thee to forget*, we give thee better in their stead, or the like thereof."‡

Any passages which Mahomet, thus finding to be inconvenient, or otherwise inexpedient for publication, altered or withdrew from the original transcripts before they went into circulation, will, of course, not be found in our present Coran. But this does not in any measure affect the value of the Coran as an exponent of Mahomet's opinions, or rather of the opinions he finally professed to hold; since what we now have, though possibly corrected and modified by himself, is still *his own.*§

* *Kâtib al Wâckidi*, p. 169. † *Ibid*, p. 169½. ‡ *Sura* II. v. 100.

§ The following are, I believe, the only instances of withdrawal or omission referred to in the traditions:—

It is, moreover, not impossible that verses which had been allowed to fall into abeyance and become obsolete, or the suppression of which Mahomet may himself have desired, were sought out by the blind zeal of his followers and, with pious

Nor some obsolete, suppressed, or ephemeral passages.

First.—Upon the slaughter of the seventy Moslems at Bîr Maûna, Mahomet pretended to have received a message from them through the Deity, which is given by different traditionists (with slight variations) as follows:—

*بلغوا قومنا عنا انا لقينا ربنا فرضى عنا و رضينا عنه—"Convey to our people this intelligence regarding us, that we have met our Lord, and that He is well pleased with us, and we are well pleased with Him." *Kâtib al Wâckidi*, pp. 108½ and 280½; *Tabari*, p. 415. After this had been repeated by all the believers for some time as a verse of the Coran, it was cancelled and withdrawn. No adequate reason is recognizable for this cancelment. That supposed by Weil, viz., that the message is from the slain Moslems and not like the rest of the Coran, from God himself, is hardly sufficient, because in other places also the formula of the divine message has to be supplied. Here the insertion of some such expression as—"SAY, thus saith thy Lord,—*thy companions say unto me, convey to our people,*" &c., would reduce the passage to the Mahometan rule of coming from the mouth of God himself.

Second.—Omar is said thus to have addressed his subjects at Medîna:—"Take heed, ye people, that ye abandon not the verse which commands stoning for adultery; and if any one say, *we do not find two punishments* (*i.e.* one for adultery and another for fornication) *in the book of the Lord*, I reply that verily I have seen the Prophet of the Lord executing the punishment of stoning for adultery, and we have put in force the same after him. And, by the Lord! if it were not that men would say "*Omar hath introduced something new into the Coran*," I would have inserted the same in the Coran, for truly I have read the verse—*و الشيخ و الشيخة اذا زنا فارجموهما البتة—"*The married man and the married woman when they commit adultery stone them both without doubt.*" *Kâtib al Wâckidi*, p. 245½; *Weil's Mohammed*, p. 351. That this command should have been omitted, after being once entered in the Coran, appears strangely unaccountable when we remember its great importance as a civil rule, and the prominent part it occupied in the controversy with the Jews, who were accused of hiding the similar command alleged to be in the Old Testament. There must, however, be some foundation for Omar's speech, because stoning is still by Mahometan law the punishment for adultery, and the only authority for the practice is the withdrawn verse.

Third.—A tradition is quoted by Maracci (ii. p. 42), to the effect that a verse about a valley of gold has been omitted from Sura x. at v. 26, but the authority seems doubtful.

veneration for everything believed to be the word of God, entered in Zeid's collection. On the other hand, many early passages of ephemeral interest may, without any design on the part of Mahomet, have entirely disappeared in the lapse of time; and no trace being left, they must necessarily have been omitted from the compilation. But both of these are hypothetical positions, unsupported by actual evidence or tradition. *

CONCLUSION. The Coran is an authentic record of Mahomet's revelations.

The conclusion, which we may now with confidence draw, is that the editions both of Abu Bacr and of Othmân were, not only faithful, but complete as far as the materials went; and that whatever omissions there may have been, they were not on the part of the compilers intentional. The real drawback to the inestimable

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Fourth.—I have already noticed the tale by Abdallah ibn Masûd, of his discovering that a verse had disappeared during the night from his leaves, it having been cancelled from heaven. *Vide* above, p. iv.

There is a fifth passage regarding the goddesses of Mecca, which Mahomet is said to have repeated at the suggestion of Satan as a verse of the Coran, and which is held to have been expunged under divine direction by Mahomet himself. *Kâtib al Wâckidi*, p. 39; *Tabari*, p. 140; *Note by Dr. Sprenger*, p. 128; *Asiatic Journal*, No. xii. See also below in Chapter v. But according to Moslem ideas, these words never formed an actual portion of the Revelation.

The Mahometans divide the abrogated passages into three classes: I. Where the *writing* is cancelled and removed, but the purport or command remains, as in the first and second instances given above. II. Where the *command* is cancelled, but the writing or passage itself remains, as in the abrogated verses regarding Jerusalem being the Kiblah, &c. III. Where the writing and purport are both cancelled, as in the third and fourth instances, quoted in this note. *See Maracci*, ii. p. 42.

* The possibility of unintentional omissions from the Coran before its fragments were collected into one volume, is admitted in the very reason urged by Omar for its collection;—he feared, if there was farther slaughter among those who had it by heart, *that much might be lost from the Coran. Mishcât*, i. 525. There is also a tradition from Zeid himself that the last verse of Sura ix. (or, as others say, a section of Sura xxiii.) was found with Khuzeima, after all the rest of the Coran had been collected. The tradition, however, is suspicious. It seems improbable that any portion of either of those Suras should have been so imperfectly preserved, seeing that both are Medina ones, and the former, (Sura ix.) the *very last* revealed. *Possibly* the recovered verse had been revealed so lately, that sufficient time had not elapsed for copies to get abroad.

value of the Coran, as a contemporary and authentic record of Mahomet's character and actions, is the want of arrangement and connection which pervades it; so that, in inquiring into the meaning and force of a passage, no infallible dependence can be placed upon the adjacent sentences as being the true context. But bating this serious defect, we may upon the strongest presumption affirm that every verse in the Coran is the genuine and unaltered composition of Mahomet himself, and conclude with at least a close approximation to the verdict of Von Hammer—*That we hold the Coran to be as surely Mahomet's word, as the Mahometans hold it to be the word of God.**

Importance of the Coran as furnishing contemporary evidence of Mahomet's own words and character.

The importance of this deduction can hardly be over-estimated. The Coran becomes the ground-work and the test of all inquiries into the origin of Islam and the character of its founder. Here we have a store-house of *Mahomet's own words recorded during his life*, extending over the whole course of his public career, and illustrating his religious views, his public acts, and his domestic character. By this standard of his own making we may safely judge his life and actions, for it *must* represent either what he actually thought, or that which he desired to appear as thinking. And so true a mirror is the Coran of Mahomet's character, that the saying became proverbial among the early Moslems, خلقه القران—*His character is the Coran.*† "Tell me,"—was the curious inquiry often put to Ayesha, as well as to Mahomet's other widows, "tell me something about the Prophet's disposition."—

* "Der Koran eben so sicher für Mohammeds Wort, als den Moslimen für das Gottes gilt." Weil, though dissenting from this opinion, allows "that no *important* alterations, additions, or omissions have been made:" —"so glauben wir auch nicht an *bedeutende* Veränderungen, Zusätze oder Auslassungen." *Mohammed*, p. 352; But *Cnf. Pref.* p. xv.

So Dr. Sprenger: "Though the Coran may not be free from interpolations, yet there seems to be no reason for doubting its authenticity." *Life of Mohammed*, p. 63.

Even on this ground, the Coran would still form the grand basis of Mahomet's biography.

† *Kâtib al Wâckidi*, p. 70½. This tradition is repeated by the Kâtib al Wâckidi from different authorities, many times, and in the same words. It would appear to have become proverbial.

"Thou hast the Coran," replied Ayesha, "art thou not an Arab, and readest the Arabic tongue?"—"Yea, verily."—"Then," answered she, "why takest thou the trouble to inquire of me? For the Prophet's disposition is no other than the Coran." Of Mahomet's biography the Coran indeed is the key-stone.

TRADITION, the chief material of early Moslem history,

Having gained this firm position, we proceed to inquire into the credibility and authority of the other source of early Mahometan history, viz., TRADITION. This must always form the chief material for the biography of the Prophet. It may be possible to establish from the Coran the salient events of his life, but tradition alone enables us to determine their relative position, and to weave them together with the tissue of intermediate affairs.

described.

Mahometan tradition consists of the sayings of the friends and followers of the Prophet, handed down by a real or supposed chain of narrators to the period when they were collected, recorded, and classified. The process of transmission was for the most part oral. It may be sketched as follows.

The habits of the early Moslems favoured growth of tradition,

After the death of Mahomet, the main employment of his followers was arms. The pursuit of pleasure, and the formal round of religious observances, filled up the interstices of active life, but afforded scanty exercise for the higher faculties of the mind. The tedium of long and irksome marches, and the lazy intervals from one campaign to another, fell listlessly upon a simple and semi-barbarous race. These intervals were occupied, and that tedium beguiled, chiefly by calling up the past in familiar conversation or more formal discourse. On what topic, then, would the early Moslems more enthusiastically descant than on the acts and sayings of that wonderful man who had called them into existence as a conquering nation, and had placed in their hands "the keys both of this World and of Paradise?"

which in the lapse of time invested Mahomet with supernatural attributes.

Thus the converse of Mahomet's followers would be much about him. The majesty of his character gained greatness by contemplation; and, as time removed him farther and farther from them, the lineaments of the mysterious mortal who was wont to hold familiar intercourse with the messengers of heaven, rose in

dimmer, but in more gigantic proportions. The mind was unconsciously led on to think of him as endowed with supernatural power, and ever surrounded by supernatural agency. Here was the material out of which Tradition grew luxuriantly. Whenever there was at hand no standard of fact whereby these recitals might be tested, the Memory was aided by the unchecked efforts of the Imagination; and as days rolled on the latter element gained complete ascendancy.

Superstitious reverence with which the traditions of the *Companions* were regarded by the succeeding generation.

Such is the result which the lapse of time would naturally have upon the minds and the narratives of the *As-hâb* or "COMPANIONS" of Mahomet,—more especially of those who were young when he died. And then another race sprang up who had never seen the Prophet, who looked up to his contemporaries with a superstitious reverence, and who listened to their stories of him as to the tidings of a messenger from the other world. "Is it possible, father of Abdallah! that thou hast been with Mahomet?" was the question addressed by a pious Moslem to Hodzeifa, in the mosque of Kufâ; "didst thou really see the Prophet, and wert thou on familiar terms with him?"—"Son of my uncle! it is indeed as thou sayest."—"And how wert thou wont to behave towards the Prophet?"—"Verily, we used to labour hard to please him."—"Well, by the Lord!" exclaimed the ardent listener, "had I been but alive in his time, I would not have allowed him to put his blessed foot upon the earth, but would have borne him on my shoulders wherever he listed."*—Upon another occasion, the youthful Obeida listened to a Companion who was reciting before an assembly how the Prophet's head was shaved at the Pilgrimage, and the hair distributed amongst his followers; the eyes of the young man glistened as the speaker proceeded, and he interrupted him with the impatient exclamation,—"Would that I had even a single one of those blessed hairs! I would cherish it for ever, and prize it beyond all the gold and silver in the world."† Such were the natural feelings of fond devotion with which the Prophet came to be regarded by the followers of the "Companions.'

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* *Hishâmi*, p. 295.

† *Kâtib al Wâckidi*, p. 279.

The *Successors* belong to the latter half of the first century.

As the tale of the Companions was thus taken up by their followers, distance began to invest it with an increasing charm, while the products of a living faith and warm imagination were being fast debased by superstitious credulity. This second generation are termed in the language of the patriotic lore of Arabia, *Tábiún*, or SUCCESSORS. Here and there a *Companion* survived till near the end of the first century; but, for all practical purposes, they had passed off the stage before the commencement of its last quarter. Their first *Successors*, who were in some measure also their contemporaries, flourished in the latter half of the same century, though some of the oldest may have survived for a time in the second.*

Meanwhile a new cause was at work, which gave to the tales of Mahomet's companions a fresh and an adventitious importance.

The wants of the expanding empire required an enlargement of the administrative code of the Coran.

The Arabs, a simple and unsophisticated race, found in the Coran ample provisions for the regulation of all their affairs, religious, social, and political. But the aspect of Islam soon underwent a mighty change. Scarcely was the Prophet dead when his followers issued forth from their barren peninsula, armed with the warrant of the Coran to impose the faith of Mahomet upon all the nations of the earth. Within a century they had, as a first step to this universal subjugation, conquered every land that intervened between the banks of the Oxus and the farthest shores of Northern Africa and of Spain; and had enrolled the great majority of their

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*Sprenger gives the names of the companions of the Prophet who survived the latest. He mentions the last six, who died between the years A.H. 86 and 100. Among these is the famous traditionist, Anas ibn Mâlik. *Mohammed*, p. 67, note 3.

But those who lived to that advanced period must either have been very young when they knew Mahomet, or have by this time become decrepit and superannuated. In the former case, their evidence as the contemporaries of the Prophet is of little value; in the latter, their prime as narrators must have passed away. Hence, for practical purposes, we would limit generally the age of the Companions to the first half or three-quarters of the seventh century. Thus, supposing a Companion to have reached his sixty-fifth year in A.D. 675, he would have been only twenty-two years of age at the Prophet's death, and but twelve years of age at the time of the flight. A possible margin of ten or twelve additional years may be left for cases of great age and unusual strength of memory.

peoples under the standard of the Coran. This vast empire differed widely indeed from the Arabia of Mahomet's time; and that which well sufficed for the patriarchal simplicity and limited social system of the early Arabs, became utterly inadequate for the hourly multiplying wants of their descendants. Crowded cities, like Fostât, Kufâ, and Damascus, required an elaborate compilation of laws for the guidance of their courts of justice: new political relations demanded a system of international equity: the speculations of a people before whom literature was preparing to throw open her arena, and the controversies of eager factions upon nice points of Mahometan faith, were impatient of the narrow limits which confined them:—all called loudly for the enlargement of the scanty and naked dogmas of the Coran, and for the development of its defective code of ethics.

Yet the Coran was at first the sole authoritative rule of conduct.

And yet it was the cardinal principle of early Islam, that the standard of Law, of Theology, and of Politics, was the Coran and the Coran alone. By it Mahomet himself ruled; to it in his teaching he always referred; from it he professed to derive his opinions, and upon it to ground his decisions. If he, the Messenger of the Lord, and the Founder of the faith, was thus bound by the Coran, much more were the Caliphs, his uninspired substitutes. New and unforeseen circumstances were continually arising, for which the Coran contained no provision. It no longer sufficed for its original object. How then were its deficiencies to be supplied?

The deficiency supplied by the SUNNAT, or sayings and practice of Mahomet.

The difficulty was resolved by adopting the CUSTOM or "SUNNAT" of Mahomet, that is, his *sayings* and his *practice*, as a supplement to the Coran. The recitals regarding the life of the Prophet now acquired an unlooked-for value. *He* had never held himself to be infallible, except when directly inspired of God; but this new doctrine assumed that a heavenly and unerring guidance pervaded every word and action of his prophetic life. Tradition was thus invested with the force of law, and with some of the authority of inspiration. It was in great measure owing to the rise of this theory, that, during the first century of Islam, the cumbrous recitals of tradition so far outstripped the dimensions of reality. The prerogative now claimed for Tradition stimulated the growth of fabricated evidence, and led to the preservation of every kind

Incentive created thereby to the fabrication and propagation of Tradition: the *Collectors.*

of story, spurious or real, touching the Prophet. Before the close of the century it had imparted an almost incredible impulse to the search for traditions, and had in fact given birth to the new profession of *Collectors.* Men devoted their lives to the business. They travelled from city to city, and from tribe to tribe, over the whole Mahometan world; sought out by personal inquiry every vestige of Mahomet's biography yet lingering among the *Companions*, the *Successors*, and their descendants; and committed to writing the tales and reminiscences with which they used to edify their wondering and admiring auditors.

General *collections* of biographical tradition.

The work, however, too closely affected the public interests, and the political aspect of the empire, to be left entirely to private and individual zeal. About a hundred years after Mahomet, the Caliph Omar II. issued circular orders for the formal collection of all extant traditions.* The task thus begun continued to be vigorously prosecuted, but we possess no authentic remains of any compilation of an earlier date than the middle or end of the second century. Then, indeed, ample materials had been amassed, and they have been handed down to us both in the shape of *Biographies* and of *general Collections*, which bear upon every imaginable point of Mahomet's character, and detail the minutest incidents of his life.

Tradition not recorded till the latter part of the 1st century.

It thus appears that the traditions we now possess remained generally in an unrecorded form for at least the greater part of a century. It is not indeed denied that some of Mahomet's sayings may possibly have been noted down in writing during his lifetime, and from that source copied and propagated afterwards. We say *possibly*, for the evidence in favour of any such record is meagre, suspicious, and contradictory. The few and uncertain statements of this nature may have owed their origin to the authority which a habit of the kind would impart to the name of a Companion, supposed to have practised it. All the original references which I have been able to trace bearing upon this

* He committed to Abu Bacr ibn Muhammad the task of compiling all the traditions he could meet with. This traditionist died A.H. 120, aged 84. *Sprenger's Mohammed*, p. 67.

question have been thrown together in the subjoined note.* It is hardly possible that, if the custom had prevailed of writing down Mahomet's sayings during his life, we should not have had frequent intimation of the fact, with notices of the writers, and special references to the nature, contents, and peculiar authority of

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*From certain early traditions it may be concluded that it was not *customary*, before the time of the Caliph Omar II (A.H. 100), to reduce to writing the current traditions. "Omar II, son of Abd al Aziz, wrote to Abu Bacr ibn Muhammad thus;—'Look out (at Medina), for whatever traditions there are of Mahomet, or of the by-gone *Sunnat*, or for any traditions of Amarah daughter of Abd al Rahmân, and commit them to writing, for verily I fear the obliteration of knowledge (tradition) and the departure (death) of the people possessing it." *Kâtib al Wâckidi*, p. 178.

Again—"Sâlih ibn Keisân related as follows:—Zohri (died A.H. 124) and I joined each other and sought after knowledge (traditions); and we spake one to another saying—'Let us write down the *Sunnat*'—(traditions regarding Mahomet;) so we recorded the traditions which came down from the Prophet. Then said Zohri—'Let us now record that also which doth emanate from the Companions of the Prophet, for it too is *Sunnat*.' I replied, 'it is not *Sunnat*:' and I recorded none of it. So he wrote (the latter,) but I did not; and thus he obtained his object, but I lost the opportunity of obtaining this knowledge." *Ibid.* p. 178½.

And again, the secretary of Wâckidi relates the following speech by Zohri:—"I used to be greatly averse to writing down knowledge (traditions) until these rulers (the Caliphs, &c.) forced me to do so. Then I saw it (to be right) that none of the Moslems should be hindered from it" (*i.e.* from readily acquiring traditional knowledge in a recorded form.)—

قال كنا نكره كتاب العلم حتى اكرهنا عليه هولاء الامراء فرائنا ان لا يمنعه احد من المسلمين *Ibidem.*

This important tradition seems to be decisive against the previous practice, at any rate as a *general* one, of recording traditions. The other authorities I have met with on the point are very weak. They are as follows:—

Marwân (when Governor of Medîna, in Muâvia's reign) secreted scribes behind a curtain; then he called Zeid ibn Thâbit, (one of Mahomet's Companions, and the collector of the Coran,) and began to question him, the men meanwhile writing his answers down. But Zeid turning round saw them writing and called out, "Treachery, Marwân! My words are those of my own opinion only" (*i.e.* not authoritative tradition.) *Ibid.* p. 173.

Again:—Abdallah ibn Amr asked permission of Mahomet, to take down in writing what he heard from him, and Mahomet gave him permission. So he wrote it down, and he used to call that book *Al Sâdica* ("The True.") Mujâhid (born A.H. 11, died A.H. 100) says he saw a book Abdallah

their records. But no such references or quotations are anywhere to be found. It cannot be objected that the Arabs trusted so implicitly to their memory that they regarded oral to be as authori-

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had, and he asked him regarding it, and he replied, "This is *Al Sâdica;* therein is what I heard from the Prophet; there is not in it between him and me any one" (*i.e.* its contents are derived immediately from him.) *Ibid.* p. 175½.

Again:—"Omar (the successor of Abu Bacr) intended to write down the Sunnat, and prayed to the Lord regarding it for a month: when at last he was ready to commence the work, he desisted, saying—'I remember a people who recorded a writing similar thereunto, and then followed after it, leaving the Book of the Lord.'" *Ibid.* p. 235½.

Dr. Sprenger has carefully collected several traditions, both for and against the opinion that Mahomet's sayings were recorded during his life-time. At p. 67 of his *Life of Mohammed*, notes 1 and 2, will be found a few traditions in which the above-mentioned Abdallah, and one or two others, are said to have written down such memoranda. On the other hand, at p. 64, note 1, are transcribed three or four traditions to the effect that Mahomet *forbad* his followers to record any of his sayings, and stopped them when they had begun to do so, "lest they should fall into the confusion of the Jews and the Christians." Both sets of traditions seem to be equally balanced, and for reasons given in the text I would reject both as untrustworthy. See also some traditions in Dr. Sprenger's note on Zohri; *Asiatic Journal* for 1851, p. 396.

The phrase أخبرنا or حدثنا "such a one informed me"—the technical link in the traditional chain—does not *necessarily* imply that the traditional matter was conveyed *orally* and not in a recorded form. With the later traditionists it certainly came to be applied likewise to relations *already preserved in writing* by the party on whose authority they are delivered. This is very clearly shewn by Dr. Sprenger, in his notice of Tabari; *Asiatic Journal*, No. ccxii, p. 1090. Tabari constantly introduces traditions, with this formula, from Ibn Ishâc and Wâckidi; and on turning to these authors, we find the same matter word for word, as quoted by Tabari. The fair conclusion is that it may be the same with some of the authorities earlier than Ibn Ishâc, and we shall see reason below for believing that it was so in the case of Orwa and Zohri.

After the above was in type, I have been favoured by Dr. Sprenger with his *Second Notice on A. von Kremer's Wâckidi*, in the Cal. As. Journal for 1856. The subject of the earliest biographers of Mahomet, and their authorities, is there discussed with his usual learning and research. He establishes it as at least highly probable that Orwa (born A.H. 23, died 94) wrote a biography of the Prophet; "but unfortunately the prejudice that it was not proper to have any other book than the Coran induced him to efface all his traditions." No farther light is thrown on the recording of events, or traditions, contemporaneously with Mahomet, or shortly after his death; and that is the point on which the argument in the text turns.

tative as recorded narratives, and therefore would take no note of the latter; for we see that Omar was afraid lest even the Coran, believed by him to be divine and itself the subject of heavenly care, should become defective if left to the *memory* of man. Just as little weight, on the other hand, should be allowed to the tradition that Mahomet *prohibited* his followers from noting down his words; though it is not easy to see how that tradition could have gained currency at all, had it been the regular and constant practice of any persons to record his sayings. The truth appears to be that there was in reality no such practice; and that the story of the prohibition, though spurious, embodies the *after-thought* of serious Mahometans as to what Mahomet *would have said*, had he foreseen the loose and fabricated stories that sprang up, and the real danger his people would fall into of allowing *Tradition* to supersede the *Coran*. The evils of Tradition were, in truth, as little thought of as its value was perceived, till many years after Mahomet's death.

Even if recorded memoranda were kept in Mahomet's life-time, none of them can be connected with any traditions now extant.

But even were we to admit all that has been advanced, it would prove no more than that *some of the Companions used to keep memoranda* of the Prophet's sayings. Now, unless it be possible to connect such memoranda with extant Tradition, the concession would be useless. But it is not, as far as I know, demonstrable of any single tradition or class of traditions now in existence, that they were copied from such memoranda, or have been derived in any way from them. To prove, therefore, that *some* traditions were at first recorded, will not help us to a knowledge of whether any of these still exist, or to a discrimination of them from others resting on a purely oral basis. The very most that could be urged from the premises is, that our present collections *may* contain *some* traditions founded upon a recorded original, and handed down in writing; but we are unable to single out any individual tradition and make such affirmation regarding it. The entire mass of extant tradition rests in this respect on the same uncertain ground, and the uncertainty of any one portion (apart from internal evidence of probability) attaches equally to the whole. We cannot with confidence, or even with the least show of likelihood, affirm of *any* tradition that it was recorded till nearly the end of the first century of the Hegira.

Mahometan tradition being at first purely oral is not only uncertain, but affected by bias and prejudice.

We see, then, how entirely Tradition, as now possessed by us, rests its authority on the *memory* of those who handed it down; and how dependent therefore it must have been upon their convictions and their prejudices. For, in addition to the common frailty of human recollection which renders traditional evidence notoriously infirm, and to the errors or exaggerations which always distort a narrative transmitted orally through many witnesses, there exist throughout Mahometan Tradition abundant indications of actual fabrication; and there may everywhere be traced the indirect but not less powerful and dangerous influence of a silently working bias, which insensibly gave its colour and its shape to all the stories of their Prophet treasured up in the memories of the believers.

For estimating these influences, historical review necessary.

To form an adequate conception of the value and defects of Tradition, it is absolutely necessary that the nature and extent of this influence should be thoroughly understood; and it is therefore essential that the reader should possess an outline of the political aspect of the empire from the death of Mahomet to the period at which our *written* authorities commence. Such an outline I will now endeavour briefly to trace.

During the two first Caliphates, faction unknown.

Mahomet survived for ten years the era of his *Hegira* or emigration from Mecca to Medina. The caliphates of Abu Bakr and of Omar occupied the thirteen succeeding years, during which the new-born empire, animated by the one ruling passion of enforcing an universal submission to Islam, was still unbroken by division. The distorting medium of FACTION had not yet interposed betwixt us and Mahomet. The chief tendency to be dreaded in the Tradition transmitted through this period, or originating in it, is one which was then perhaps even stronger and more busy than in the approaching days of civil broil, namely, the disposition to exalt the character of Mahomet, and to endow it with superhuman attributes.

A.H. 23–35. Effect on tradition of the divisions following the murder of Othmân;—not unfavourable.

The weak and vacillating reign of Othmân nourished or gave birth to the discontent and conspiracy of Ali and his party, who, by the murder of the aged prince, caused a fatal rent in the unity of the empire, and left it a prey to the contending factions of the new competitors for the caliphate. The immediate effect of this disunion was not unfavourable to the historical value of Tradition. For although each party would be tempted to colour their recol-

lections by their own factious bias, they would still be conscious that a hostile criticism was opposed to them. And, while as yet there were alive on either side eye-witnesses of the Prophet's actions, both would be cautious in advancing what might be liable to dispute, and eager to denounce and expose every false statement of their opponents.*

A.H. 35--40. The Caliphates of the Ommeyad Dynasty favourable to the truthfulness of tradition.

The caliphate of Ali, after a troubled and doubtful existence of four-and-a-half years, was terminated by assassination, and the opposing faction of the Ommeyads then gained undisputed supremacy. During the protracted sovereignty of this Dynasty, that is for nearly one hundred years, the influence of the ruling power directly opposed the superstitious dogmas of the adherents of Mahomet's more immediate family. The authority of a line which derived its descent from Abû Sofiân, long the grand opponent of the Prophet, may naturally have softened the asperity of Tradition regarding the conduct of their progenitor, while it aided with perhaps the loudest note in swelling the chorus of glory to Mahomet. But it would be tempted to none of the distorting fabrications of those whose object was to make out a divine right of succession in favour of the uncle or the descendants of the Founder of Islam; and who, for that end, invested them with virtues, and attributed to them actions, which never had existence. Such in the process of time were the motives, and such was the practice, of the partizans of the houses of Ali and Abbâs, the son-in-law and the uncle of Mahomet. In the early part, however, of the Ommeyad succession, these insidious tendencies had but little room for play. The fiction of divine right, even had it been

* The following tradition seems to illustrate this position:—

Othmân (when Caliph) commanded, saying:—"It is not permitted to any one to relate a tradition as from the Prophet, which he hath not already heard in the time of Abu Bacr or Omar. And verily nothing hinders me from repeating traditions of the Prophet's sayings, (although I be one of those endowed with the most retentive memory amongst all his Companions,) but that I have heard him say, *Whoever shall repeat of me that which I have not said, his resting-place shall be in Hell.*" *Kâtib al Wâckidi*, p. 168½.

This tradition, if well founded, gives pretty clear intimation that even before Othmân's murder, fabricated traditions were propagated by his opponents to shake his authority, and that the unfortunate Caliph endeavoured to check the practice, by forbidding the repetition of any fresh recitals which had not already been made known in the caliphates of his two predecessors.

thought of, contradicted too directly the knowledge and convictions of the early Moslems to have met with any support. The unqualified opposition of a large section of Mahomet's most intimate friends to Ali himself shows how little ground there then was for regarding him as the peculiar favourite of heaven. The Khârijites, or sectarians of the theocratic principle and the extreme opponents of the Ommeyads, went the length of condemning and rejecting Ali for the scandalous crime of parleying with Muâvia* and submiting his claims to arbitration. It is hence evident that the extravagant pretensions of the Alyites and Abbâssides were not entertained, or even dreamt of, in the early part of the Ommeyad caliphate.

The type cast in this period never after materially altered.

During this century the main fabric of Tradition grew up, and assumed permanent shape. Towards its close, the extant traditions began to be systematically sought out, and publicly put upon record. The type then moulded could not but be maintained, in its chief features at least, ever after. Subsequent sectaries might strive to re-cast it; their efforts could secure but a very partial success, because the only standard they possessed was formed under the influence of the Ommeyad princes. In the traditional impress of this period, although the features of Mahomet himself were magnified into majestic and supernatural dimensions yet the character of his friends and followers, and the general events of early Islam, were undoubtedly preserved with tolerable accuracy, and thus a broad basis of historical truth has been maintained.

Alyite and Abbasside parties conspire to supplant the Ommayad line,

But in the latter part of the period now before us, an undercurrent of great volume and intensity commenced to flow. The adherents of the house of Ali, beaten in the field and in all their rebellious attempts to dethrone the Ommeyads, were driven to other expedients; and the key-stone of their new machinations was the divine right of the family of the Prophet to both temporal and spiritual rule. They established secret associations, and sent forth emissaries in every direction, to decry the Ommeyads as godless usurpers, and to canvass for the Alyite pretender of the day. These claims were ever and anon strengthened by the

* The first of the Ommeyad line.

mysterious report that the divine Imâm of Ali's race was about to step forth from his hidden recess, and stand confessed the Conqueror of the world. Such attempts, however, issued in no more permanent results than a succession of rebellions, massacres, and fruitless civil wars, until another party leagued themselves in the struggle. These were the Abbâssides, who desired to raise to the throne some descendant of the Prophet's uncle, Abbâs. They combined with the Alyites in denouncing as usurpers the present dynasty, which, though sprung from the Coreish, was but distantly related to Mahomet. By their united endeavours they at length succeeded in supplanting the Ommeyads; when the Alyites found themselves over-reached, and an Abbâsside Caliph was raised to the throne.

and for that object fabricate and pervert tradition.

It is not difficult to perceive how much Tradition must have been affected by these unwearied conspirators. *Perverted tradition* was, in fact, the chief instrument employed to accomplish their ends. By it they blackened the memory of the forefathers of the Ommeyads, and exalted the progenitors of the Abbâssides. By it they were enabled almost to deify Ali, and to assert their principle that the right of empire vested solely in the near relatives of the Prophet, and in their descendants. For these ends no device was spared. The Coran was misinterpreted, and tradition falsely colored, distorted, and fabricated. Their operations were concealed; studiously avoiding the eye of any one likely to oppose them, they canvassed in the dark. Thus they were safe from criticism; and the stories and glosses of their traditional schools unobtrusively acquired the character of prescriptive evidence.

Accession of the Abbassides, 136 A.H.;

In the 136th year of the Hegira, the Abbâssides were installed in the imperial caliphate; and the factious teaching, which had hitherto flourished only in the distant satrapies of Persia or, when it ventured near the throne, lurked in the purlieus of crowded cities, now stalked forth with the prestige of sovereignty. The Ommeyads, regarded as the mortal foes of the new dynasty, were persecuted even to extirpation, and their names and descent overwhelmed with obloquy.*

* *Weil's Gesch. der Chalifen*, vol. ii. p. 7.

under whom the biography by *Ibn Ishâc* (the earliest of which anything is extant,) was compiled.

It was under the auspices of the two first of the Abbâssides that the earliest biography of which we have any remains was composed, that, namely, of IBN ISHAC. It is cause for little wonder, then, that he follows in the steps of his patrons; and that, while lauding their ancestors, he seeks to stigmatize the Ommeyads, and to denounce as miscreants those of their forefathers who acted a prominent part in the first scenes of Islamite history.

A.H. 198-218. The intolerant Caliphate of Al Mâmûn,

The fifth Caliph from this period was the famous Al Mâmûn, who, during a reign of twenty years, countenanced with a princely support the pursuits of literature. He affected a combination with the followers of Ali,* and adopted with enthusiasm the peculiar teaching of the Motazelites;—a sect whom the learned Weil applauds as the *Rationalists* of Islam. But however freely this Caliph may have derided the doctrine of the eternity of the Coran, and in opposition to orthodox believers asserted the freedom of the human will, he was not a whit less bigoted or intolerant than his predecessors. He not only declared Ali to be the noblest of mortals, and Muâvia the basest, but he denounced the most severe punishment against any one who should venture to speak evil of the one, or attribute good to the other.† He made strenuous efforts to impose his theological views upon all. He went so far as to establish even a species of inquisition, and visited with penalties those who dared to differ from him.‡ Unhappily for us, this very reign was the busiest age of the traditional writers, and the period at which (with the exception of that of Ibn Ishâc) the earliest extant biographies of Mahomet were composed. It was under Al Mâmûn that WÂCKIDI, IBN HISHÂM, and MADAINI, lived and wrote. Justly, indeed, may Dr. Weil sorrow over this as a coincidence fraught with evil to the interests of historical truth. "We look upon it," says he, "as a great misfortune, that the

was the era when the great traditional and biographical authorities now extant flourished. Baneful influences then at work.

* When the Abbâssides reached the throne, they cast aside the Alyide platform from which they had made the fortunate ascent. They were then obliged in self defence to crush with an iron hand every rising of the Alyites who found to their cost that, after all their wiles and machinations, they had at last become the unconscious tools for raising to power a party with whom they had in reality as little fellow-feeling as with the Ommeyads. They deserved their fate.

† *Gesch. Chalifen*, vol. ii. p. 258. ‡ *Ibid.* p. 265.

very three oldest Arabic histories, which are nearly the only sources of authority for the first period of Islam, were written under the Government of Mâmûn. At a period when every word in favour of Muâvia rendered the speaker liable to death, and when all were declared outlaws who would not acknowledge Ali to be the most distinguished of mankind, it was not possible to compose, with even the smallest degree of impartiality, a history of the Companions of Mahomet and of his Successors; because, as we have before seen, the personal interests of Ali and his descendants, and their pretensions to the Caliphate, are connected in the closest manner with the most important political events of the first two centuries."*

The general collections of tradition made under similar influences.

But besides the biographers of Mahomet and the historians of early Islam, the *Collectors of general tradition*, who likewise flourished at this period, came within the circle of Abbâsside influence, and some of them under the direct persuasion of Al Mâmûn. This class of men, as shown above, travelled over the whole empire, and searched after every kind of tradition which bore the slightest relation to their Prophet. The mass of narrations gathered by this laborious process was sifted by a pseudo-critical canon, founded on the general repute of the narrators who formed the chain from Mahomet downwards; and the approved residuum was published under the authority of the Collector's name. Such collections were more popular than the biographical or historical treatises. They formed, in fact, and still form the groundwork of the different theological schools of Islam; and, having been used universally and studied continuously from the period of their appearance, exist to the present day in an authentic and genuine shape. Copies of them abound in all Moslem countries; whereas the early biographies are either not extant at all, or can only be procured with great difficulty.

Two schools; the *Sunni*, and the *Shia*.

The six standard *Sunni* collections were compiled exclusively under the Abbâsside Caliphs, and the earliest of them partly during the reign of Al Mâmûn.† The four canonical collections

* *Gesch. Chalifen*, vol. ii. p. 267.

† The names of the authors of the six collections, with those of the other popular traditional compilations, are noted by Dr. Sprenger (*Life of*

of the *Shîas* were prepared somewhat later,* and are incomparably less trustworthy than the former, because their paramount object is to build up the divine *Imâmat* or headship of Ali and his descendants.

Service rendered by the Collectors.

That the Collectors of Tradition rendered an important service to Islam, and even to history, cannot be doubted. The vast flood of tradition, poured forth from every quarter of the Moslem empire, and daily gathering volume from innumerable tributaries, was composed of the most heterogeneous elements; without the labours of the traditionists it must soon have formed a chaotic sea, in which truth and error, fact and fable, would have mingled together in undistinguishable confusion. It is a legitimate inference from the foregoing sketch, that Tradition, in the second century, embraced a large element of truth. That even respectably derived traditions often contained much that was exaggerated and fabulous, is an equally fair conclusion. It is proved by the testimony of the Collectors themselves, that thousands and tens of thousands were current in their times, which possessed not even a shadow of authority. The mass may be likened to the image in Nebuchadnezzar's dream, formed by the unnatural union of gold, of silver, of the baser metals, and of clay; and here the more valuable parts were fast commingling hopelessly with the bad.

Immense proportion of fictitious matter in the current tradition,

The prodigious amount of base and fictitious material may be gathered from the estimate even of Mahometan criticism. Upon this topic the opinion of Dr. Weil may be received with confidence and approbation:—"Reliance," he writes, "upon oral traditions, at a time when they were transmitted by memory

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Mohammed, p. 68, note 2,) together with the date of each author's death. Dr. Sprenger has, however, omitted the earliest collection of all, viz. that of Imâm Mâlik Al Muatta—born A.H. 95, died A.H. 179. This work was lithographed at Delhi in 1849. It is held in very great esteem, and although not generally included among the standard *six*, it is yet believed by many to be the source whence a great portion of their materials are derived. "It is, as it were, the origin and *mother* of the two *Sahîh*," *i.e.* of the collections of Bokhâri and of Muslim.

* *Sprenger's Mohammed*, p. 68, note 3,

alone, and every day produced new divisions among the professors of Islam, opened up a wide field for fabrication and distortion. There was nothing easier, when required to defend any religious or political system, than to appeal to an oral tradition of the Prophet. The nature of these so-called traditions, and the manner in which the name of Mahomet was abused to support all possible lies and absurdities, may be gathered most clearly from the fact that Bokhâri, who travelled from land to land to gather from the learned the traditions they had received, came to the conclusion, after many years' sifting, that out of 600,000 traditions ascertained by him to be then current, only 4,000 were authentic! And of this selected number, the European critic is compelled, without hesitation, to reject at least one-half."* Similar appears to have been the experience of the other intelligent compilers of the day. Thus Abu Dâûd, out of 500,000 traditions which he is said to have amassed, threw aside 496,000, and retained as trustworthy only 4,000.†

rejected even by the Mahometan Collectors;

The heavenly vision which induced Bokhâri to commence his pious and herculean task, is sufficently significant of the urgent necessity that then existed for searching out and preserving the grains of truth scattered here and there amid the chaff. These are his words:—"In a dream I beheld the Messenger of the Lord (Mahomet), from whom I seemed to be driving off the flies. When I awoke I inquired of an interpreter of dreams the meaning of my vision. *It is*, he replied, *that thou shalt drive away* LIES *far from him.* This it was which induced me to compile the *Sahîh*." And well, indeed, in the eyes of Mahometans, did he fulfil the heavenly behest; for, to this day,

illustrated by an anecdote from Bokhâri.

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* *Gesch. Chalifen*, vol. ii. p. 290; *Ibn Khallicân, by Slane*, vol. ii. p. 595.

† *Gesch. Chalifen*, vol. ii. p. 291; *Ibn Khallicân*, vol. i. p. 589. The latter authority makes the number selected 4,800; but the selected number is still spoken of as doubtful. "I wrote down," says Abu Dâûd, "five hundred thousand traditions respecting the Prophet, from which I selected those, to the number of four thousand eight hundred, which are contained in this book (the *Sunan*). I have mentioned herein the authentic, *those which seem to be authentic* (يشبه), *and those which are nearly so.*"

the SAHÎH BOKHÂRI is regarded by them as one of the most authentic treasuries of Tradition.*

The Collectors, though unsparing in the rejection of un-trustworthy traditions, did not discriminate those that were trustworthy by any intelligent canon;

It is evident, then, that some species of criticism was practised by the Compilers; and that, too, so unsparingly that out of a hundred traditions not more than *one* was accepted, and the remaining ninety-nine entirely rejected. But the European reader will be grievously deceived if he at all regards such criticism, rigorous as it was, in the light of a sound and discriminating investigation into the credibility of the traditional elements. It was not the *subject-matter* of a tradition, but simply the *names* attached thereto, which decided the question of credit. Its authority must rest on some Companion of the Prophet, and on the character of each individual in the long chain of witnesses through whom it was handed down.† If these were unimpeachable, the tradition *must be received.* No inherent improbability, however glaring, could exclude a narration thus attested from its place in the authentic collections. The compilers would not venture upon the open sea of criticism, but steered slavishly by this single miserable canon along the shallows of a mere formal system. They dared not inquire into internal evidence. To have arraigned the motives of the first author or subsequent rehearsers of a story, discussed its probability, and brought it to

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* *Abu Abdallah Muhammad,* surnamed from his country, *Al Bokhâri,* was born A.H. 194; but, with rare precocity, he had in his eighteenth year already commenced the labour of his life in collecting and sifting traditions. We may therefore conclude that the full influence of the Caliph Mâmûn was brought to bear upon his works. Ibn Khallicân says of him;—"Animated with the desire of collecting traditions, he went to see most of the traditionists in all the great cities; he wrote down in Khorâsân, in the cities of Irâk, in the Hijaz, in Syria, and in Egypt, the information he thus acquired." *Ibn Khallicân,* vol. ii. p. 595.

† This may be illustrated by the practice of Bokhâri and Muslim. Out of 40,000 men, who are said to have been instrumental in handing down Tradition, they acknowledged the authority of only 2,000 by receiving their traditions. A *later* writer states that, of these 40,000 persons, only 226 should be excepted as undeserving of credit. This may throw light upon one cause at least of the vast store of fabulous narratives in the works of the more modern biographers, viz., that they were less careful about their authorities. See *Sprenger's Mohammad,* p. 65, note 1.

the test of historical evidence, would have been a strange and uncongenial task. The spirit of Islam would not brook the spirit of free inquiry and real criticism. The blind faith of Mahomet and his followers spurned the aids of investigation and of evidence. *Thus saith the Prophet of the Lord*, and every doubt must vanish, every rising question be smothered. If doubts *did* arise, and questions *were* entertained, by any rash philosopher, the temporal authority was at hand to dispel and to silence them. The dogmas of Islam were so closely welded with the principles upon which the Moslem government was reared, that it had no option but to enforce with a stern front and iron hand an implicit acquiescence in those dogmas on which its existence hung. Upon the apostate Moslem the sentence of death,—an award resting on the Prophet's authority,—was rigorously executed by the civil power; and between the heterodoxy of the free-thinker, and the lapse of the renegade, there never existed any well-defined boundary. To the combination, or rather the *unity*, of the spiritual and political elements in the unvarying type of Mahometan Government, must be attributed that utter absence of candid and free investigation into the origin and truth of Islam, which so painfully characterizes the Moslem mind even in the present day. The faculty of criticism was annihilated by the sword.

for the political element of Islâm had extinguished free enquiry and real criticism.

Upon the other hand, there is no reason to doubt that the Collectors were sincere and honest in doing that which they professed to do. It may well be admitted that they sought out in good faith all traditions actually current, inquired carefully into the authorities on which they rested, and recorded them with the most scrupulous accuracy. The sanctions of religion were at hand to enforce diligence and caution. Thus Bokhâri, who, as we have just seen, commenced his work at a supposed divine monition, was heard to say "that he never inserted a tradition in his *Sahîh*, until he had made an ablution, and offered up a prayer of two *rakas*."* The prepossessions of the several Collectors would undoubtedly influence them in accepting or rejecting the chain of witnesses to any traditions; but there is no reason to suppose that

But they were honest in accomplishing what they professed.

* *Ibn Khallicân*, vol. ii. p. 596.

they at all tampered with the traditions themselves. Thus a *Shîa* collector would cast aside a tradition received from Ayesha through an Ommeyad channel; whilst one of Ommeyad predilections would discard every traditional chain in the links of which he discovered an emissary of the house of Ali. But neither the one nor the other was likely to *fabricate* a tradition, or *interpolate* a narration, whatever its purport or bearing might be, which they had once received on an unexceptionable array of names as credible.

Guarantees and evidence of their honesty.

The honesty of the compilers is warranted by the style and contents of their works. The complete series of witnesses, by which every tradition is traced up through each stage of transmission to one of the Prophet's Companions, is invariably prefixed; and we cannot but admit the authority which even the *names* of at least the later witnesses in such a chain would impart.* These were not feigned names, but the names of real characters, many of whom were personages of note. The traditional collections were openly published, and the credit of the compilers would have been endangered by the fabrication of such evidence.† The Collector was likewise, in general, the centre of a school of traditional learning which, as it were, challenged the public to test its authorities. So far, then, as this kind of attestation *can* give weight to hearsay, that weight may be readily conceded. Again, the simple manner in which the most contradictory traditions are accepted, and placed side by side, is a guarantee of sincerity. All that could be collected seem to have been thrown together with scrupulous simplicity. Each tradition, though it be a bare repetition, or

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* A tradition is always given in the direct form of speech in which it is supposed to have been originally uttered. Thus:—"A informed me, saying that B had spoken to the effect that C had told him, saying D mentioned that he heard E relate that he had listened to F, who said;— *I heard G enquiring of Ayesha 'What food did the Prophet of the Lord like?' and she replied, 'Verily, he loved sweetmeats and honey, and greatly relished a pumpkin.'*" The technical links in these narrations are generally اخبرنا or حدثنا *I have heard from such a one,* or *such a one informed me;* and قالت قال —"quoth he," "quoth she."

† Even the omission, or disguising the names, of any authorities in a traditional chain, destroyed the credit of a traditionist. It was called—*tadlîs.* See Sprenger's *Second Notice of Wâckidi; As. Journal,* 1856.

possibly the direct opposite, of a dozen preceding it, is noted down unquestioned, with its special chain of witnesses; whilst no account whatever is made of the most violent improbabilities, of incidents plainly fabulous, or even of patent contradictions.* Now this appears evidence at least of an honest design. Pains would otherwise have been taken to exclude or to soften down opposing statements; and we should not have found so much allowed to be credible Tradition, which either on the one hand or on the other must have crossed the views and prejudices of the compiler. If we suppose *design*, we must suppose at the same time a less even-handed admission of contrary traditions.

How far do the collections of tradition contain elements of truth?

Conceding, then, the general honesty of the collectors in making their selection, upon an absurd principle indeed, yet *bonâ fide* from existing materials, let us now turn to their selected compilations, and inquire whether they contain any authentic elements of the biography of Mahomet; and if so, how and to what extent these have become commingled with adventitious or erroneous matter.

The fragmentary and isolated character of each tradition prevents application of the ordinary checks on a continuous narrative.

In the first place, how far does the present text afford us ground for confidence that its contents are identical with the supposed evidence originally given forth by contemporary witnesses? To place the case in the strongest point of view, we shall suppose a class of traditions purporting to have been *written* by the Companions, and to have been recorded at each successive stage of transmission. There is a peculiarity in traditional composition which, even upon this supposition, would render it always of doubtful authority; namely, that each tradition is short and abrupt, and completely isolated from every other. The isolation extends not simply to the traditions themselves as finally compiled by the collector, but to their whole history and descent throughout the two centuries preceding their collection. At

* No Mahometan is of course expected to believe implicitly in two contradictory traditions. All properly attested traditions are *recorded;* but many of them are acknowledged *weak* or *doubtful;* and when they contradict one another, the choice is left to the student. The historians of Mahomet and of early Islam, when they relate contradictory or varying narratives, sometimes add an expression of their own opinion as to which is preferable. They also sometimes mark doubtful stories by the addition;—"But the Lord (only) knows whether this be false or true."

every point they are each completely detached and independent; and this, coupled with the generally brief and fragmentary character of the statements made in them, deprives us of the checks and critical appliances which may be brought to bear on an extended and continuous narration. From the disconnected character of the composition, the common tests of authenticity are generally impossible. There is no context whereby to judge the soundness of the text. Each witness in the chain, though professing simply to repeat the original tradition, is in effect an independent authority; and we cannot tell how far, and at what stages, variations may or may not have been allowed, or fresh matter interpolated by any of them. Even were we satisfied of the integrity of all, we are unacquainted with their views as to the liberty with which Tradition might be treated. The style of the narrations marks them for the most part as communicated at the first with all the informality of social conversation, and with much of the looseness of hearsay; and a similar informality and looseness may have attached to any of the steps of their subsequent transmission.

Each tradition was regarded as a unit, to be, without investigation of its parts, accepted or rejected as a whole.

Again, each tradition was not only isolated, but was held by the collectors to be an *indivisible unit*, and as such received or rejected. If the traditional links were unexceptionable, the tradition must be accepted *as it stood*, whole and entire. There could be no sifting of component parts. Whatever in each tradition might be true, and whatever might be fictitious,—the probable and the fabulous,—composed an indissoluble whole; so that the acceptance or rejection of one portion involved the acceptance or rejection of every portion, as equally credible or undeserving of credit. The power of eradicating interpolated statements, or of excluding such parts of a tradition as were evidently unfounded or erroneous, was thus renounced. The good seed and the tares were reaped together, and the latter vastly predominated.

Coincidence of separate traditions a possible, but practically unknown, proof of faithful transmission.

It may be possible, indeed, to derive some confirmation from the verbal correspondence of separate traditions regarding the same event; for, if such traditions sprang at the first from a common source (*i.e.* some Companion of Mahomet), and if they were really handed down through independent channels *unconnected*

with one another, the coincidence of expression would argue faithfulness of transmission. But the conditions here required, it would be difficult, even in a single instance, to prove to the satisfaction of a critical mind. The earlier links of tradition are removed far back in the obscurity of an imperfect dawn. It is impossible to say whether the lines of transmission supposed to have been entirely separate, may not have come into contact, and how often; and whether the matter common to them may not have been thus obtained, or previously existing variations thus reconciled. Many traditions, though supported by unexceptionable names, and corresponding with others even to minute verbal coincidence, abound in stories so fabulous, and statements so erroneous, as to render it impossible that they could ever have formed part of any contemporary record, and to shake our confidence in the whole system of "*respectable names*." There is also reason for believing (as will be seen farther below) that much of the coincidence of narrative is derived from those traditionists who, at the close of the first and beginning of the second centuries, reduced to writing, and harmonized the traditions extant in their day.

The exclusively oral character of early tradition deprives it of every check against the license of error and fabrication.

Such is the uncertainty which would attach to Tradition, even if we should concede that it had been recorded from the first. But we have shown that there is no ground whatever for believing that the practice of committing traditions to writing was observed in the first days of Islam, or became general until the greater part of a century had elapsed. The existence of an early record would have afforded *some* check; but, as the facts stand, there is absolutely no check at all. The record would have at the least induced a fixed cast of expression and an element of invariableness; whereas Tradition purely oral is as wavering and changeful as the character and habits, the associations and the prejudices, of each witness in the chain of repetition. No possible precaution could hinder the commingling in oral tradition of mistake or fabrication with what at the first may have been real fact and trustworthy representation. The flood-gates of error, extravagance, fiction, are thrown wide open; and we need only look to human nature similarly situated in any part of the globe, and in every age, to be satisfied that little dependence can be placed on

otherwise unsupported details of ordinary historical incident; and none whatever upon the recital of supernatural wonders, conveyed for any length of time through such a channel.* That Mahometan experience proves no exception to the general principle, the puerile extravagancies and splendid fabrications of oriental imagination which adorn or darken the pages of early Islam, amply demonstrate. The critical test applied by the collectors had, as we have just seen, no reference whatever to these pregnant sources of error; and, though it may have exposed and excluded multitudes of modern fabrications, it failed to place the earlier traditions upon a certain basis, or to supply any means of judging, between the actual and the fictitious, between the offspring of the imagination and the sober evidence of fact.

Tradition tested by its correspondence with the Coran.

It remains to examine the traditional books, with reference to their contents and internal probability. And here we are fortunate in having at hand, as a standard of comparison, the Coran, which has been already proved a genuine and contemporary document.

The main historical and biographical outlines agree.

In bringing Tradition to this test, we find that in its main historical points the Coran is at one with the standard traditional collections. It notices, sometimes directly, sometimes incidentally, the topics which, from time to time, most interested Mahomet; and with these salient points the mass of tradition is found upon the whole to tally. The statements and allusions of this description in the Coran, though themselves comparatively few, are linked more or less with a vast variety of important incidents which refer, as well to the Prophet individually and his domestic relations, as to public events and the progress of Islam. A just confidence is thus imparted that a large element of historical truth has been conveyed by tradition.

Disagreement in certain important points, as the power to work miracles.

Upon the other hand, there are subjects in which the Coran is directly at variance with Tradition. For example, there is no position more satisfactorily established by the Coran than that Mahomet did not in any part of his career perform miracles, or

* This subject has been well discussed in the *Treatise on Politics* by *Lewes*, vol. i. pp. 187, 188.

pretend to perform them. Yet tradition abounds with miraculous acts, which belie the plain declarations of the Coran; and which, moreover, if ever attempted, would undoubtedly have been mentioned in those pretended revelations which omitted nothing, however trivial, that could strengthen the prophetical claim. Here, then, in matters of simple narration and historical fact, we find Tradition discredited by the Coran.

Perplexing alternative.

The result of the comparison, then, is precisely that which we have already arrived at, *à priori*, from the foregoing historical review. But though it strengthens this conclusion, the comparison does not afford us much help in the practical treatment of Tradition itself. Excepting in a limited number of events, it furnishes us with no rule for eliminating truth from falsehood. Facts which we know from the Coran to be well founded, and tales which we know to be fabricated, are indiscriminately woven together; the whole tissue of Tradition, it may reasonably be concluded, is formed of this double class of heterogeneous materials; and of both the fabric and colour are so unvaryingly uniform, that we are at a loss for any means of distinguishing the one from the other. The biographer of Mahomet continually runs the risk of substituting for the realities of history some puerile fancy or extravagant invention. In striving to avoid this danger he is exposed to the opposite peril of rejecting, as pious fabrications, what may in reality be important historical fact, or at the least contain its substance.*

* This is well expressed by Dr. Weil:—"Ich durfte daher nicht bloss die Quelle übertragen oder je nach Gutdünken excerpiren, sondern musste ihren Angaben vorher einer strengen Kritik unterwerfen; denn wenn man überhaupt gegen alle orientalischen Schriftsteller misstrauisch seyn muss, so hat man hier doppelten Grund dazu, weil sie nicht nur von ihrer Leidenschaft und ihrer Phantasie, sondern auch von ihrer religiösen Schwärmerei geleitet waren. Schon im zweiten Jahrhundert, als die ersten Biographen Mohammeds auftraten, die ihre Erzählungen noch auf Aussage seiner Zeitgenossen Zurückzuführen wagen, war sein ganzes Leben, nicht nur von seiner Geburt, sondern schon von seiner Zeugung an, bis zu seinem Tode, von einem Gewebe von Märchen und Legenden umsponnen, das auch das nüchternste europäische Auge nicht immer ganz zu durchschauen und abzulösen vermag, ohne Gefahr zu laufen, aus allzu grosser Aengstlichkeit auch wirkliche historische Facta als fromme Dichtung anzusehen." *Weil's Mohammed*, pp. xiv, xv.

Opinion of Dr. Sprenger too favorable to Tradition.

It is, indeed, the opinion of Dr. Sprenger that "although the nearest view of the Prophet which we can obtain is at a distance of one hundred years," and although this long vista is formed of a medium *exclusively* Mahometan, yet our knowledge of the bias of the narrators "enables us to correct the media, and to make them almost achromatic."* The remark is true to some extent; but its full and absolute application would carry us, I think, much beyond the truth. The difficulties of the task cannot without danger be underrated. To bring to a right focus the various lights of Tradition, to reject those that are fictitious, to restore to a proper direction the rays reflected by a false and deceptive surface, to calculate the extent of aberration, and make due allowance for a thousand disturbing influences;—this is indeed a work of entanglement and complication, which would require for its perfect accomplishment a finer discernment, and a machinery of nicer construction, than human nature can boast of. Nevertheless, it is right that an attempt should be made, however imperfect the success that may attend it. It is possible that, by a comprehensive consideration of the subject, and a careful discrination of the several sources of error, we may reach, at the least, an approximation to the truth. With this view I will now endeavour to lay down some principles which may prove useful to the historical inquirer in separating the true from the false in Mahometan Tradition.

An attempt to lay down tests for discriminating what is reliable in Tradition.

Traditional evidence *ex parte*. Our tests must depend on internal examination.

The grand defect in the traditional evidence regarding Mahomet consists in its being wholly *ex parte*. It is the statement of a witness regarding himself, in which the license of partiality and self-interest is unchecked by any opposing party, and the sanction even of a neutral audience is wanting. What was thus defective or erroneous in the process by which the testimony was obtained, may in some measure be corrected or repaired by a close scrutiny of the record itself. By analysing the deposition, we may find internal evidence affording grounds for credit or for doubt; while in reference to some classes of statements, it may even appear that a Mahometan public would itself supply the place of an impartial censor. In this view, the points on which the pro-

* *Sprenger's Mohammed*, p. 68.

bability of a tradition will mainly depend, appear to be *first*, whether there existed a bias among the Mahometans generally respecting the subject narrated; *second*, whether there are traces of any special interest, prejudice, or design, on the part of the narrator; and *third*, whether the narrator had opportunity for personally knowing the facts. These topics will perhaps best be discussed by considering the *Period* to which a narration relates, and then the *Subject* of which it treats.

Two divisions; *period* and *subject* of event narrated.

I. A.—The PERIOD to which a tradition purports to refer, is a point of vital importance. The original authors of all reliable Tradition were, as has been shown, the *Companions* of Mahomet himself; and the era of its first propagation was subsequent to the Prophet's decease. But Mahomet was above threescore years old when he died; and few of his Companions, who were instrumental in giving rise to Tradition, were of equal age,—hardly any of them older. In inverse proportion to their years, the number of aged men was small, and the period short during which they survived Mahomet; and these are precisely the considerations by which their influence, in the formation of Tradition, must be limited also. The great majority were young; and in proportion to their youth was the number that survived longest, and gave the deepest impress to Tradition.* We may, then, fix the term of Mahomet's own life as the extreme backward limit within which our witnesses range themselves. In other words, we have virtually no original witnesses who lived at a period anterior to Mahomet; few, if any, were born before him; the great majority, very many years after him. They are not, therefore, trustworthy witnesses for events preceding Mahomet's birth, or for the details of his childhood; few of them, even, for the incidents of his youth. They could not by any possibility possess a personal knowledge

I. PERIOD. *First.*—Up to entrance of Mahomet on public life. All our witnesses younger, and most of them much younger than Mahomet;

their personal knowledge cannot therefore go farther back than his youth at the earliest.

* Abu Bacr, for instance, was within two years of Mahomet's age; but then he survived him only two-and-a-half years. Most of the elderly Companions either died a natural death, or were killed in action before Tradition came into vogue. Thus Kâtibal Wâckidi writes;—"The reason why many of the chief men of the Companions have left few traditions, is that they died before there was any necessity of referring to them." He adds—"The chiefest among the Companions, Abu Bacr, Othmân, Talha, &c., gave forth fewer traditions than others. *There did not issue from them, anything like the number of traditions that did from the younger Companions.*" p. 176.

of these things; and to admit that they gained their information at second-hand, is to introduce an element of uncertainty which entirely impairs the value of their testimony as that of contemporary witnesses.

Attention not excited till Mahomet had publicly assumed the prophetic office.

B.—But, again, the value of evidence depends upon the degree in which the facts are noticed by the witness at the time of their occurrence. If the attention was not specially attracted by the event, it would be in vain to expect a full and careful report; and, after the lapse of many years, the utmost that could be looked for from such a witness, would be the bare general outline of importants facts. This principle applies forcibly to the biography of Mahomet up to the time when he became the prominent leader of a party. Before, there was nothing remarkable about him. A poor orphan, a quiet inoffensive citizen, he was perhaps of all the inhabitants of Mecca the least likely to have the eyes of his neighbours turned upon him, and their memory and imagination busy in noting the events of his life, and conjuring up anticipations of coming greatness. The remark may be extended, not merely to the era when he first made pretensions to inspiration (for that excited the regard of a few only among his earliest adherents); but to the entire interval preceding the period when he stood forth *publicly* to assume the prophetic rank, opposed polytheism, and came into open collision with the chiefs of Mecca. Then, indeed, he began to be narrowly watched; and thenceforward the Companions of the Prophet are not to be distrusted on the score at least of insufficient attention.

For events prior to Mahomet's public life, circumstantiality a ground of suspicion.

C.—It follows necessarily that, in all cases affected by either of the foregoing rules, circumstantiality will be a strong token of fabrication. And we shall do well to adopt the analogous canon of Christian criticism, that any tradition, the origin of which is not strictly contemporary with the facts related, *is worthless exactly in proportion to the particularity of detail.** This will relieve us of

* Adapted from Alford. *Greek Test. Proleg.* p. 56. His remarks are strikingly illustrative of Mahometan tradition. "As usual in traditional matter, on our advance to later writers, we find more and more particular accounts given; the year of John's life, the reigning Emperor, &c., under which the Gospel was written." But Christian traditionists were mere tyros

a vast number of extravagant stories, in which the minutiæ of close narrative and sustained colloquy are preserved with the pseudo-freshness of yesterday.

D.—It will, however, be just to admit an exception for the main outlines of Mahomet's life, which under ordinary circumstances his friends and acquaintances would naturally remember or might learn from himself, and would thus be able in after days to call up with tolerable accuracy. Such, for instance, are the death of his father, his nurture as an infant by the Bani Sád, his mother's journey with him to Medîna, and the expedition with his uncle to Syria while yet a boy. A still wider exception must be allowed in favor of public personages and national events, even preceding Mahomet's birth; because the attention of the people at large would be actively directed to these topics, while the patriarchal habits of the Arabs and their spirit of clanship, would be propitious for their tenacious recollection. Thus the conversation of Abd al Muttalib, Mahomet's grandfather, with Abraha, the Abyssinian invader, is far more likely to be founded in fact than any of the much later conversations which Mahomet himself is said to have had with the monks on either of his journeys to Syria; and yet the leading facts regarding these journeys there is no reason to doubt.

Exception in favour of the leading outlines of Mahomet's life;

public events;

Ranged under the same exception will fall those genealogical and historical facts, the preservation of which for five or six centuries by the memory alone, is so wonderful a phenomenon in the story of Arabia. Here poetry, no doubt, aided the retentive faculty. The glowing rhapsodies of the bard were at once caught up by his admiring clan, and soon passed into the mouths even of the children. In such poetry were preserved the names of the chieftains, their feats of bravery, their glorious liberality, the unparalleled nobility of their breeds of the camel and the horse. Many of these odes became national, and carried with them the testimony, not of the tribe only, but of the whole Arab family.

and national history.

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in the art of discovering such "particular accounts," in comparison with the Mahometans, at the talisman of whose pen distance vanishes, and even centuries deliver up the minutest details which they had engulphed.

Thus poetry, superadded to the passion for genealogical and tribal reminiscences, and the singular capacity of imprinting them indelibly on the memory of generations, have secured to us the interwoven details of many centuries with a minuteness and particularity that would excite suspicion were not their reality in many instances established by other evidence and by internal coincidence.*

Second period.—From entrance on public life to taking of Mecca, *i.e.* B.H. 10 to A.H. 8.

E.—A second marked section of time is that which intervenes between Mahomet's entrance on public life, and the taking of Mecca. Here indeed we have two opposing parties, marshalled against each other in mortal strife, whose statements might have been a check one upon the other. But during this interval, or very shortly after its close, one of the parties was wholly extirpated. Its chief leaders were nearly all killed in battle, and the remainder amalgamated with the victors. Where-

No surviving evidence on the side of the Meccans; or against Mahomet and his party.

fore, we have no surviving evidence whatever on the side of Mahomet's enemies. Not a single advocate was left to explain their actions, often misrepresented by hatred; or to rebut the unfounded accusations and exaggerated charges imputed to them by Mahomet and his followers. On the other hand, we have no witnesses of any kind against Mahomet and his party, whose one-sided assertions of their innocence and justice might perhaps otherwise have been often successfully impugned. The intemperate

* M. A. P Caussin de Perceval who, with incredible labour and proportionate success, has sought out and arranged these facts into an uniform history, thus justly expresses his estimate of the Arab genealogical traditions:—

J'ai dit que toutes les généalogies Arabes n'étaient point certaines; on en trouve en effet un grand nombre d'évidemment incompletes. Mais il en est aussi beaucoup d'authentiques, et qui remontent, sans lacune probable, jusqu'à environ six siècles avant Mahomet. C'est un phénoméne vraiment singulier chez un peuple inculte et en général étranger à l'art de l'écriture, comme l'étaient les Arabes, que cette fidélité à garder le souvenir des ancêtres. Elle prenait sa source dans un sentiment de fierté, dans l'estime qu'ils faisaient de leur noblesse. Les noms des aïeux, gravés dans la mémoire des enfants, étaient les archives des familles. A ces noms se rattachaient nécessairement quelques notions sur la vie des individus, sur les événements dans lesquels ils avaient figuré; et c'est ainsi que les traditions se perpétuaient d'âge en âge. *Essai Sur L'Histoire des Arabes*, vol i. pref. p. 9.

and unguarded language of Mahomet and the Companions is sufficient proof that, in speaking of their adversaries their opinion was seldom impartial, and their judgment not always unerring.

F.—It may be urged in reply, that the great body of the hostile Meccans who eventually went over to Islam, would still form a check upon any material misrepresentation of their party. It may be readily admitted that they did form some check on the perversion of public opinion in matters not vitally connected with the credit of Islam and of its Founder. Their influence would also tend to preserve the reports of their own individual actions, and perhaps those of their friends and relatives, in as favourable a light as possible. But this influence at best was partial. It must ever be borne in mind that the enemies of the Prophet who now joined his ranks acquired, at the same time or very shortly after, all the *esprit de corps* of Islam.* And, long before the stream of Tradition commenced its course, these very men had begun to look back upon the heathenism of their own Meccan career with the same horror or contempt as the early converts did. The stains of the Moslem's unbelieving life were, on his conversion, washed away, and imparted no tarnish to his subsequent character. He had sinned "ignorantly in unbelief;" but now, both in his own view and in the eyes of his comrades, he was *another man*. He might therefore well speak of his mad opposition to "the Prophet of the Lord" and the divine message, with as hearty a reprobation as other men; nay, the violence of reaction might make his language even stronger. Such are the witnesses who constitute our only check upon the *ex parte* story told by Mahometans of their long struggle with the idolators of Mecca.

To what degree the Meccan party, as finally incorporated with the Moslems, proved a check upon misrepresentation.

G.—Wherefore, it is incumbent upon us, in estimating the folly,

* Thus Abu Sofiân, himself the leader in the last stage of the opposition against Mahomet, became a zealous Moslem, and fought under the banners of his own son in the first Syrian campaign.

"Le vieil Abu-Sofyan, qui autrefois avait souvent combattu contre Mahomet, devenu alors un des plus zélés sectateurs de l'Islamisme, avait voulu servir sous son fils, et l'aider des conseils de son experience." *Caus. de Perc. L'Histoire des Arabes*, vol. iii. p. 429.

injustice, and cruelty, attributed to the opponents of the Prophet, to make much allowance for the exclusively hostile character of the evidence. We may, also, suspect exaggeration in the statements of hardship and persecution suffered by the Moslems at their hands. Above all, the history of those who died in unbelief, before the conquest of Mecca, and under the ban of Mahomet, must be subjected to a rigid criticism. For such men as Abu Jahl and Abu Lahab, hated and cursed by their Prophet, what Mahometan dared to be the advocate? To the present day, the hearty ejaculation, *May the Lord curse him!* is linked by every Moslem with the mention of such "enemies of the Lord, and of his Prophet." What voice would be raised to correct the pious exaggerations of the faithful in the stories of *their* execrable deeds, or to point out the just causes of provocation which they might have received? Impious attempt, and mad perversity! Again and again was the bare sword of Omar brandished over the neck of the luckless offender, for conduct far more excusable, and far less dangerous to Islam.

Evidence against the opponents of Mahomet to be received with suspicion.

So also with the Jewish, Christian and Pagan tribes of Arabia.

H.—Precisely similar limitations must be brought to bear on the evidence against the Jewish settlements in the vicinity of Medîna, as the Bani Nadhîr and Bani Coreitza, whom Mahomet either expatriated, brought over to his faith, or utterly extirpated. The various Arab tribes also, whether Christian or Pagan, whom Mahomet at different times of his life attacked, come more or less under the same category.

Similar considerations apply to the *Hypocrites*, or disaffected inhabitants of Medina.

I.—The same considerations apply also, though in a greatly modified form, to the "Hypocrites," or disaffected population of Medîna, who covertly opposed the claim of Mahomet to temporal authority over that city. The Prophet did not wage the same war of defiance with these as he did with his Meccan opponents, but sought to counteract their influence by his own skilful tactics. Neither was this class so suddenly rooted out as the idolaters of Mecca; they rather vanished gradually before the increasing authority of Islam. Still its chiefs, such as Abdallah ibn Obey, are held in abhorrence by the traditionists, and the historian must keep a jealous eye on the character of the testimony against them.

II.—The SUBJECT-MATTER of the traditions themselves, considered both as regards the motives of their author and the views of early Mahometan society generally, will help us to an estimate of their credibility. The chief aspects in which this argument may be treated refer to *personal*, *party*, and *national*, bias.

II. SUBJECT MATTER as affected by *personal*, *party*, or *national*, bias.

A.—*Individual* prepossession and self-interested motives would cause exaggeration, false colouring, and even invention. Besides the more obvious cases falling under this head, there is a fertile class which originates in the ambition of the narrator to be associated with Mahomet. The name of the Prophet threw nobility and veneration around every object immediately connected with it. The friendship of Mahomet imparted a rank and a dignity acknowledged by the universal voice of Islam. It is difficult to conceive the excessive reverence and court enjoyed by his widows, his friends, and his servants. Interminable inquiries were put to them; and their responses were received with the most implicit deference. All who possessed any personal knowledge of the Prophet, and especially those who had been much with him and been honoured by his familiar acquaintance, were admitted by common consent into the envied circle of Moslem aristocracy; and many a picturesque scene is incidentally sketched by the traditionists of the listening crowds which hung upon the lips of these men while they delivered their testimony in the mosques of Kufâ or of Damascus. The sterling value of such qualifications would induce a counterfeit imitation. Some who may have had but a distant and superficial knowledge of Mahomet would be tempted, by the consideration it imparted, to venture on the assumption of a more perfect intimacy; and the endeavour to support their equivocal position by particularity of detail, would lead the way to loose and unfounded narratives of the life and character of the Prophet.* Analogous with such misleading influences is the ambition, traceable throughout the traditions of the

1. *Personal* ambition of being associated with Mahomet.

* In after days, traditionists were even *bribed* to fabricate stories regarding the ancestors of persons, who desired the honour of having their families thus ennobled by the supposed intimacy or favour of the Prophet. See the notice of Shovahbîl who was thus accused, in Sprenger's *Second Notice of Wâckidi*, *As. Soc. Jour.* 1856.

Companions, of being closely connected with any of the supposed mysterious visitations or supernatural actions of Mahomet. To be *noticed* in the Revelation was deemed the highest honour that could be aspired to; and in any way to be linked with the heavenly phases of the Prophet's life, reflected back a portion of the divine lustre on the fortunate aspirant.* Thus a premium was put upon the invention or exaggeration of superhuman incidents.

Exaggeration of personal merit in the cause of Islam.

B.—Under the same head are to be classed the attempts of narrators to exaggerate their labours and exploits, and to multiply their losses and perils, in the service of the Prophet and of Islam. The tendency thus to appropriate a superior, and often a clearly unwarrantable, degree of merit is obvious on the part of many of the Companions of Mahomet.† A reference to it may be even occasionally employed by the critic towards the exculpation of

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* The following example will illustrate this position:—Ayesha's party having been delayed on an expedition, the verse permitting *Tayammum*, or substitution of sand for lustration with water, was in consequence revealed in the Coran. The honor conferred by this indirect connection with a divine revelation is thus eulogized by Useid:—"This is not the least of the divine favours poured out upon you, ye house of Abu Bacr!" *Kâtib al Wâckidi*, p. 111½. To have been the Companion of Mahomet during the season of inspiration, at the supposed reception of a heavenly visitor, or at the performance of any wonderful work, conferred more or less distinction of a similar nature.

† We have many examples of the glory and honour lavished upon those who had suffered persecution at Mecca for Islam. Thus when Omar was Caliph, Khobâb ibn al Aratt showed him the scars of the stripes he had received from the unbelieving Meccans twenty or thirty years before. Omar seated him upon his *masnad*, saying that there was but one man who was more worthy of this favour than Khobâb, namely, Balâl (who had also been sorely persecuted by the unbelievers.) But Khobâb replied,—"Why is he more worthy than I am? He had his friends among the idolators whom the Lord raised up to help him. But I had none to help me. And I well remember one day they took me and kindled a fire for me, and threw me therein upon my back; and a man stamped with his foot upon my chest, my back being towards the ground. And when they uncovered my back, lo! it was blistered and white." *Kâtib al Wâckidi*, p. 210½.

The same principle led the Moslems to magnify the hardships which *Mahomet himself* endured. It appears to lie at the bottom of Ayesha's strange exaggerations of the Prophet's poverty and frequent starvation, which she carries so far as to say that she had not even oil to burn in her chamber while Mahomet lay dying there! The subsequent affluence and luxuries of the conquering nation, also, led them by reaction to contrast

the Prophet from questionable actions. For example, Amr ibn Omeya, in narrating his mission by Mahomet to assassinate Abu Sofiân, so magnifies the dangers and exploits of his adventure as might have involved that dark mission itself in suspicion, were there not collateral proof to support it.*

Small chance of such exaggerations and fictions being checked.

It may be here objected,—Would not untrue or exaggerated tales like these receive a check from other parties, free from the interested motives of the narrator? They would to some extent. But to prove a negative position is generally a matter of difficulty, and would not often be attempted without some strong impelling cause, especially in the early spread of Islam when the public mind was in the highest degree impressible and credulous. Such traditions, then, were likely to be opposed only when they interfered with the private claims of others, or ran counter to public opinion in which case they would fall into discredit and oblivion. Otherwise, they would have every chance of being carried down upon the traditional stream of mingled legend and truth, and with it of finding a place in the unquestioning record of the second century.

2. *Party.*—Likelihood of party traditions coming into general currency.

C.—We have unquestionable evidence that the bias of PARTY effected a deep and abiding impress upon Tradition. Where this spirit tended to produce or adorn a tale adverse to the interests of *another* party, and the denial of the facts involved nothing prejudicial to the honour of Islam, endeavours might be made to rebut the fabrication or embellishment, and the discussion so produced would subserve the purity of Tradition. But this could only occasionally occur. The tradition would often affect that sec-

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with fond regret their present state with their former simplicity and want, and even to weep at the remembrance.

Thus of the same Khobâb, it is recorded:—He had a winding-sheet ready for himself of fine Coptic cloth; and he compared it with the wretched pall of Hamza (killed at Ohod); and he contrasted his own poverty when he possessed not a dinar, with his present condition:—"and now I have in my chest by me in the house 40,000 *owckeas* (of gold or silver.) Verily, I fear that the sweets of the present world have hastened upon us. Our companions (who died in the first days of Islam) have received their reward in Paradise; but truly I dread lest my reward consist in these benefits I have obtained after their departure." *Kâtib al Wâckidi*, p. 211.

* See *Ibid.* p. 118; and *Hishâmi*, p. 450.

tion alone in whose favour it originated, and therefore not to be controverted at all. Where it might be otherwise, the story would probably at the first be confined within the limits of its own party, and no opportunity would be afforded for its contradiction, until it had taken root and acquired a prescriptive claim. Under any circumstances, the considerations advanced in the preceding paragraph are equally applicable in the present instance; so that without doubt a vast collection of exaggerated tales have come down to us, which owe their existence to party spirit.

Prejudicial influence of the lesser associations of Tribe, Family, Patron, &c.

By the bias of party is not to be understood simply the influence of faction, but likewise the partiality and prejudice of the lesser circles which formed the ramifications of Mussulman society. The former we are less in danger of overlooking. Where the full development of faction, as in the case of the Abbâssides and Ommeyads, has laid bare the passions and excesses to which it may give rise, the reader is on his guard against misrepresentation;—he receives with caution the unnaturally dark or resplendent phases of such characters as those of Ali and Abbâs, of Muâvia and Abu Sofiân. But, though on a less gigantic scale, the influences of tribe, of family, and of the smaller associations of party clustering around the several heroes of Islam, were equally real and effective. The spirit of clanship, which ran so high among the Arabs that Mahomet endeavoured in vain to supplant it by the brotherhood of the faith, perpetuated the confederacies and antipathies of ante-mahometan Arabia far down into the annals of Islam, and often exerted a potent influence upon the destinies even of the Caliphate. It cannot be doubted that these combinations and prejudices imparted a strong and often deceptive hue to the sources of tradition. As an example, may be specified the rivalry which led the several families or parties to compete with each other for the earliest converts to Islam, until they arrived at the conclusion, and consequently propagated the tradition, that some of their patrons or ancestors were Mahometans before Mahomet himself.*

* See *Sprenger's Mohammed*, pp. 158, 162, &c.; and his notice in No. cxii. of the *Asiatic Journal*, p. 123. "There is a great deal of sectarian spirit mixed up in the disputes who 'were the first believers?' The Sunnies say

D.—We now come to the class of motives incomparably the most dangerous to the purity of Tradition, namely, those which were *common to the whole Moslem body*. In the previous cases the bias was confined to a fragment, and the remainder of the nation might form a check upon the fractional aberration. But here the bias was universal, pervading the *entire medium* through which we have received Tradition; and leaving us, for the correction of its divergencies, no check whatever.

3. *National* bias; common to the whole of Islam, and therefore the most fatal.

To this class must be assigned all Tradition the object of which is to glorify Mahomet, and to invest him with supernatural attributes. Although in the Coran the Prophet disclaims the power of working miracles, yet he implies that there existed a continuous intercourse between himself and the agents of the other world. The whole Coran, indeed, assumes to be a message from the Almighty, communicated through Gabriel. Besides being the medium of revelation, that favoured angel is often referred to as bringing directions from the Lord for the guidance of his Prophet in the common concerns of life. The supposed communication with heavenly messengers, thus countenanced by Mahomet himself, was implicitly believed by his followers, and led them even during his lifetime to regard him with a superstitious awe. On a subject so impalpable to sense, so readily apprehended by imagination, it may be fairly assumed that reason had little share in controlling the fertile productions of fancy; that the conclusions of his susceptible and credulous followers far exceeded the premises granted by Mahomet; that even simple facts were construed by their excited faith as pregnant with marks of supernatural power and unearthly companionship; and that, after the object of their veneration had passed from their sight, fond devotion perpetuated and enhanced the fascinating legends. If the Prophet gazed into the heavens, or looked wistfully to the right hand or to the left,

Tendency to exalt Mahomet, and ascribe to him supernatural attributes.

Abû Bacr, and the Shîahs say Ali." Tabari also starts another candidate, Zeid ibn Hâritha (p. 111). One of the traditions, to strengthen the case *against* Abu Bacr, says that *fifty* persons were believers before him! *Ibid.* Well then may Dr. Sprenger style them "*childish disputes* on the seniority of their saints in the Islam." *Mohammed*, p. 158. Yet he himself builds too much upon them.

it was Gabriel with whom he was holding mysterious converse.* Passing gusts raise a cloud from the sandy track; the pious believer exults in the conviction that it is the dust of Gabriel and his mounted squadrons scouring the plain, and going before them to shake the foundations of the doomed fortress.† On the field of Badr, three stormy blasts sweep over the marshalled army; again, it is Gabriel with a thousand horse flying to the succour of Mahomet, while Michael and Serâfîl each with a like angelic troop wheel to the right and to the left of the Moslem front.‡

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* *Vide Kâtib al Wâckidi*, p. 33; See also *Sprenger's Mohammed*, p. 112, note 5.

† How absurd soever the idea may seem, it is taken literally from the biographers of Mahomet, and relates to the expedition against the unfortunate Bani Coreitza. *Kâtib al Wâckidi*, p. 114. Mahomet countenanced, if he did not originate the notion.

‡ *Vide Kâtib al Wâckidi*, p. 114, and p. 100½. Similar statements are made regarding the battle of Honein. *Ibid.* p. 130½. At p. 198, the angelic host is represented in the uniform of Zobeir, one of Mahomet's Companions, namely, with *yellow* turbans, on piebald horses. *Hishâmi* (p. 227,) and *Tabari* (p. 290,) give their dress at the battles of Badr and Kheibar. The Meccans on their return vanquished from Badr, are introduced as describing the warrior angels against whom they had to contend. *Hishâmi*, p. 238; *Tabari*, p. 301; *Caus. de Perc.* vol. iii. pp. 66 & 73. Various traditionists assert that the heads of the unbelievers dropped off before the Moslem swords come near them, because the invisible scimitars of the angels did the work with greater rapidity and effect than the grosser steel of Medîna. *Hishâmi*, p. 227; *Tabari*, p. 289. Gabriel fought by Abu Bacr, Michael by Ali, and Israfîl looked on. *Kâtib al Wâckidi*, p. 212½. Gabriel, after the battle of Badr was concluded, asked leave of Mahomet, without which he could not retire! *Ibid.* p. 102½. Mahomet had a conversation with Gabriel; and the particulars are related by Hâritha, *who actually saw the angel. Ibid.* p. 276. These are only samples of what recurs in almost every page of tradition, and they are quoted to bear out what might otherwise have appeared over-statement in the text.

The following may be viewed as the type of a large class of miraculous stories. Othmân, when attacked in the last fatal struggle by the conspirators, made no resistance, and being asked the cause replied that "Mahomet had made with him a covenant, and he patiently abided thereby." The Moslems (concluding, no doubt, that it was impossible their Prophet should not have foreseen so important an event as the assassination of his beloved son-in-law) referred this saying to a supposed *prophecy* by Mahomet, when he said to Othmân "that the Lord would clothe him with a garment which he was not

Nay, the very dress and martial uniform of these helmed angels are detailed by the earliest and most trustworthy biographers with as much *naiveté* as if they had been veritable warriors of flesh and blood! Such is a specimen of the vein of legend and extravagance which pervades even the purest sources of tradition.

Difficulty of discriminating what originated with Mahomet himself, in supernatural tales.

It will frequently be a question, extremely difficult and sometimes impossible to decide, what portions of these supernatural stories either originated in Mahomet himself, or received his countenance; and what portion owed its birth, after he was gone, to the excited imagination of his followers. No doubt real facts have not seldom been thus adorned or distorted by the colouring of a superstitious fancy. The subjective conceptions of the fond believer have been reflected back upon the biography of the Prophet, and have encircled even the objective realities of his life, as in the pictures of our saints, with a lustrous halo. The false colouring and fictitious light so intermingle with the picture, as to place its details beyond the reach of analytical criticism.*

Miracles.

E.—To the same universal desire of Mahomet's glorification must be ascribed the unquestioned miracles with which even the earliest biographies abound. They are such as the following:—A tree from a distance moves towards the Prophet ploughing up the

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to divest himself of at the call of the disaffected." *Ibid.* p. 191. The garment was the *caliphate*, which the conspirators would summon him to abdicate. Ayesha too was not at a loss for a scene to give a farther meaning to the mysterious words. "When Mahomet," she said, "lay on his death-bed, he summoned Othmân, and desired me to depart out of the chamber; and Othmân sat down by the dying Prophet; and as he spake with him, I beheld and lo, the colour of Othmân changed." Without doubt, say the credulous believers, it was Mahomet foretelling to his son-in-law the violent death that awaited him. *Ibid.* p. 191½. Such *suppositions* and *explanations* were in the course of time repeated as *facts*.

* The following tradition is illustrative of this. The corpse of Saad lay in an empty room. Mahomet entered alone, picking his steps carefully, as if he walked in the midst of men seated closely on the ground. On being asked the cause of so strange a proceeding, he replied,—"True, there were no men in the room, but it was so filled with angels, all seated on the ground, that I found nowhere to sit, until one of the angels spread out his wing for me on the ground, and I sat down thereon." *Ibid.* p. 264½. It is almost impossible to say what in this is Mahomet's own, and what has been concocted for him.

earth as it advances, and then similarly retires; oft-repeated attempts to murder him are miraculously averted; distant occurrences are instantaneously revealed, and future events foretold; a large company is fed from victuals hardly adequate for the supply of a single person; prayer draws down immediate showers from heaven, or causes an equally sudden cessation. A frequent and favourite class of miracles is for the Prophet, by his simple touch, to make the udders of dry goats distend with milk; so by his command he caused floods of water to well up from parched fountains, and to gush forth from empty vessels, or issue from betwixt his fingers.* With respect to all such stories, it is sufficient to refer to what has been already said, that they are opposed to the clear declarations and pervading sense of the Coran.

That it contains the recital of a miracle does not necessarily discredit an entire tradition or story.

It by no means however follows that, because a tradition relates a miracle, the collateral incidents are thereby discredited. It may be that the facts were fabricated to illustrate or embellish a current miracle; but it is also possible that the miracle was invented to adorn or account for well-founded facts. In the former case, the supposed facts are worthless; in the latter, they may be true and valuable. In the absence of other evidence, the main drift and apparent design of the narrative is all that can guide the critic between these alternatives.

Tales and legends how far ascribable to Mahomet.

F.—The same propensity to fabricate the marvellous must be borne in mind when we peruse the childish tales and extravagant legends put by tradition into the mouth of Mahomet. The Coran, it is true, imparts a far wider basis of likelihood to the narration by Mahomet of such tales, than to his assumption of miraculous powers. When the Prophet ventured to place such fanciful and unworthy fictions as those of "Solomon and the Genii," of "the seven Sleepers," or "the Adventures of Dzûl Carnein," in the pages of a *Divine* Revelation, to what puerilities might he not stoop in the familiarity of social conversation? It must, on the other hand, be remembered that Mahomet was taciturn, laconic,

* All these and scores of like incidents adorn the pages of the "honest" Secretary of Wâckidi, as well as of every other biographer and traditionist. Sprenger has over-praised the discrimination and sense of the Secretary. *Mohammed*, p. 72.

and reserved; and is therefore not likely to have given forth more than an infinitesimal part of the masses of legend and fable which Tradition represents as gathered from his lips. These are probably the growth of successive ages, each of which deposited its accretion around the nucleus of the Prophet's pregnant words, if indeed there ever was any such nucleus at all. For example, the germ of the elaborate pictures and gorgeous scenery of the Prophet's heavenly journey lies in a very short and simple recital in the Coran. That he subsequently expanded this germ, and amused or edified his companions with the minutiæ which have been brought down to us by tradition, is perhaps *possible*. But it is also possible, and (by the analogy of Mahomet's miracles) incomparably more probable, that the vast majority of these fancies have no other origin than the heated imagination of the early Mussulmans.*

Supposed anticipations of Mahomet by Jewish and Christian priests.

G.—Indirectly connected with Mahomet's life, but connected immediately with the credit and the evidences of Islam, is another class of narrations which would conjure up on all sides prophecies regarding the Founder of the faith and anticipations of his approach. These were probably, for the most part, suspended upon some general declaration or incidental remark of the Prophet

* See *Sprenger*, pp. 123—137, where these principles are admitted. That learned writer, at the same time, gives a clue to the real facts of the case. "We must never forget," he well writes, "that when his religion was victorious, he was surrounded by the most enthusiastic admirers, whose craving faith could be satiated only by the most extravagant stories. Their heated imagination would invent them by itself; he only needed to give the key, and to nod assent, to augment the number of his miracles to the infinite." His theory however appears to attribute too much to Mahomet in the construction of the legend.

It is curious, as illustrating the barrenness of the Mahometan canon of criticism, to observe that this wild legend is *according to its rules* one of the best established in tradition, not only in the main features, but in all its marvellous details. Sprenger, who is too much guided by the canon, writes here from the Mahometan stand-point. "Though the accounts which we find in Arabic and Persian authors are not free from later additions, the numerous records of Mahomet's own words give us the assurance that the narrative, in its main features, emanated from himself. *There is no event in his life, on which we have more numerous and genuine traditions than on his nightly journey.*" p. 126.

himself, which his enthusiastic followers deemed themselves bound to prove and illustrate. For example, the Jews are often accused in the Coran of wilfully rejecting Mahomet, "although they recognized him as they did one of their own sons." Tradition provides us, accordingly, with a host of Jewish rabbins and Christian monks, who found it written in their books that the last of the Prophets was at this time about to arise at Mecca: they asserted that not only his name, but his personal appearance, manners, and character, were therein depicted to the life, so that recognition could not but be instantaneous; and, among other absurd particulars, the very city of *Medîna* is pointed out by name as the place where he would take refuge from the persecution of his people! Again, the Jews are accused by Mahomet of grudging that a Prophet had arisen among the Arabs, and that their nation had thus been robbed of its prophetic dignity. Wherefore, in fit illustration we have innumerable stories of Mahomet having been recognized by the rabbins, and of attempts made by them to kill him; and this, too, long before he had any suspicion himself that he was to be a Prophet, nay *during his very infancy!* It is enough to have alluded to this class of fabrications.*

Anticipations of Islam.

H.—Such unblushing inventions will lead us to receive with suspicion the whole series of tales in which it is pretended that Mahomet and his religion were *foreshadowed*, so that pious men anticipated, long before the Prophet, many of the peculiar rites and doctrines of Islam. It was a fond conceit of Mahomet that Islam is as old as Adam, and has from the beginning been the faith of all good men who looked forward to himself as the great Prophet charged with winding up the previous dispensations. It was therefore natural for his credulous followers to carry out this idea, and to invest any serious-minded man or earnest inquirer who

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* As specimens, the Arabic scholar may consult the *Kâtib al Wâckidi*, pp. 29, 30, 30½, 31, 35½, 79½, and the whole chapter, *Description of Mahomet in the Old Testament and Gospel*, p. 69½. The key to the assertions of Mahomet alluded to in the text, lies simply in these two facts; 1st. that the Jews *did* look for a Prophet to come, which expectation Mahomet affected to appropriate to himself; 2nd. that they held this Prophet would be of the seed of David, which assertion Mahomet believed, or pretended to believe, was founded in mere envy and grudge against himself.

preceded Mahomet, with some of the dawning rays of the divine effulgence about to burst upon the world.*

History of the Prophet's ancestors, and of early Arabia, borrowed from, or conformed to, Jewish scripture and tradition.

1.—To the same spirit we may attribute the continual and palpable endeavour to make Mahometan tradition and the legends of Arabia *tally with the Scriptures of the Old Testament, and with Jewish tradition.* This canon has little application to the biography of Mahomet himself, but it has a wide and most effective range in reference to the legendary history of his ancestors and of early Arabia. The desire to regard, and possibly the endeavour

* Such are the tales regarding Zeid, (*Hishâmi*, pp. 55—59; and *Kâtib al Wâckidi*, p. 30½) who, it is said, spent his life in searching "for the religion of Abraham," till at last a monk, meeting him at Balcâ, sent him back to Mecca *to await the Prophet about to arise there!* Sentences of the Coran, and prayers in the exact expressions of Mahomet, are put into the lips of Zeid by the traditionists. The discreditable nature of these narratives is palpable from their very style and contents. *Vide Sprenger's Mohammed*, p. 43, note 4. Still I am far from denying that Zeid's enquiries and doctrines may have constituted one of the causes which prompted Mahomet to enquiry and religious thought. But whatever grounds may exist for regarding Zeid as a philosophical or a religious enquirer, one would only have smiled at the clumsiness of the structure erected by the traditionists on so slender a base, had it not been that Dr. Sprenger appears himself to recognize it, and even builds thereon in part his own theory that Mahomet "*did nothing more than gather the floating elements which had been imported or originated by others;*" and, instead of carrying Arabia along with him, was himself carried away "by the irresistible force of the spirit of the time." *Vide Life of Mohammed*, pp. 39—49.

Arabia was no doubt prepared for a religious change. Judaism and Christianity had sown the seeds of divine knowledge every here and there, and many enquiring minds may have groped the way to truth, and paved the road for Mahomet's investigations and convictions. But to none of these is Islam directly attributable. Its peculiarities are all the Prophet's own. Mahomet alone is responsible for its faults, as well as entitled to all the credit (whatever it may be) of its sole founder. It is the workmanship of his wonderful mind, and bears in every part the impress of his individuality. Such passages as the following are in this view strangely mistaken:—"*The Islam is not the work of Mahomet; it is not the doctrine of the Impostor.*" *Sprenger's Mohammed*, p. 175. Yet the learned writer charges him with its faults: "There is however no doubt that the impostor has defiled it by his immorality and perverseness of mind, and that most of the *objectionable* doctrines are his." *Ibid.* This is hardly the even-handed justice we might have expected from the philosophical principles of Sprenger.

Since the above note was in type, I am glad to find that some of its views receive confirmation from a learned and judicious writer, T. Noeldeke, in his treatise *De origine et compositione Qorani.* Gottingae, 1856, p. 15.

to prove, the Prophet of Islam a descendant of Ishmael, began even in his life-time. Many Jews, versed in the Scriptures, and won over by the inducements of Islam, were false to their own creed, and pandered their knowledge to the service of Mahomet and his followers. Jewish tradition had been long well-known in Medîna and in the countries over which Islam early spread, and the Mahometan system was now made to fit upon it; for Islam did not ignore, but merely superseded, Judaism and Christianity, as the whole does a part, or rather as that which is complete swallows up an imperfect commencement. Hence arose such absurd anachronisms as the attempts to identify Cahtân with Joktan (between whom, at the most moderate estimate, fifteen centuries intervene); thus were forged the earlier links of the Abrahamic genealogy of Mahomet, and numberless tales of Ishmael and the Israelites, cast in a semi-Jewish semi-Arab mould. These, though pretending to be original traditions, can generally be recognized as plagiarisms from Scripture and rabbinical lore, or as Arabian legends forced into accommodation with them. Abundant illustration of this important position will be met with in the two following chapters.

Traditions of the Jewish and Christian Scriptures being mutilated and interpolated.

J.—Of analogous nature may be classed the traditions which affirm that the Jews and Christians mutilated or interpolated their Scriptures. After a careful and repeated examination of the whole Coran, I have been able to discover no grounds for believing that Mahomet himself ever expressed the smallest doubt at any period of his life in regard either to the authority or the genuineness of the Old and New Testaments, as extant in his time.* He was profuse in assurances that his system entirely corresponded with both, and that he had been foretold by former prophets; and, as perverted Jews and Christians were at hand to confirm his words, and as the Bible was little known among the generality of his followers, those assurances were implicitly believed. But as Islam spread abroad, and began to include countries where the Holy Scriptures were familiarly read, the discrepancies between them and the Coran became patent to all. The sturdy believer,

* See a Treatise by the Author, entitled "*The testimony borne by the Coran to the Jewish and Christian Scriptures.*" Agra; 1856. The subject will be farther alluded to in the concluding chapter of this volume.

with an easy conscience, laid the entire blame at the door of the dishonest Jews and Christians (the former of whom their Prophet had accused in the Coran of hiding and "dislocating" the prophecies of himself); and according to the Moslem wont, a host of stories with all the necessary details of Jewish fabrication and excision soon grew up, exactly suited to the necessities of Islam.*

Why such extravagant and unfounded traditions were not contradicted.

If it appear strange that extravagant and unreasonable stories of the kind alluded to in the few last paragraphs should not have been contradicted by the more upright and sensible Mahometans of the first age, and thus nipped in the bud, it must be kept in view that criticism and freedom of opinion were completely stifled under the crushing dogmas of Islam. Any simpleton might fancy, every designing man could with ease invent, such tales; when once in currency, the attempt to disprove them would be difficult and dangerous. Supposing that no well-known fact or received dogma were contradicted by them, upon what general considerations were they to be rebutted? If any one, for instance, had contended that all human experience was contradicted by the marvellous foreknowledge of the Jews regarding Mahomet, he would have been scouted as an infidel. Honest inquiry into the genuineness of holy Scripture would have sapped

* An instance of this very numerous class of stories will be found in the *Kâtib al Wâckidi* p. 70. A Copt, reading his uncle's Bible, is struck by finding two leaves closely glued together. On opening them, he discovers the most copious details regarding Mahomet, as a Prophet immediately about to appear. His uncle was displeased at his curiosity and beat him, saying the Prophet had not yet arisen. *Cnf. Sprenger's Mohammed*, p. 140.

The following is an example of the puerile tales of later days growing out of the same spirit:— "A narrator relates that there was, in the kingdom of Syria, a Jew, who while busied on the Sabbath perusing the Old Testament, perceived on one of the leaves the name of the blessed Prophet in four places; and out of spite he cast that leaf into the fire. On the following day, he found the same name written in eight places: again he burnt the pages. On the third, he found it written in twelve places. The man marvelled exceedingly. He said within himself, 'the more I cut this name from the Scripture, the more do I find it written therein. I shall soon have the whole Bible filled with the name.' At last he resolved to proceed to Medîna to see the Prophet." The story goes on to say that he reached there after Mahomet's death, embraced his garments, "and expired in the arms of his love." See *Calcutta Review*, vol. xvii. p. 408, in an article on the *Maulûd Sharif*, or "*Nativity*" *of Mahomet*, p. 46, published at Cawnpore and at Agra, 1267–8; *Hegira.*

the foundations of Islam, and was therefore out of the question. Who would dare to argue against a miraculous tale that did honour to Mahomet, on the ground that it was in itself improbable, that the narrator might have imbibed a false impression, or that even in the Coran miraculous powers were never arrogated by the Prophet? The argument would have jeoparded the neck of the logician; for it has been already shown that the faith and the polity of Islam were one;—that free opinions and heresy were synonymous with conspiracy, treason, and rebellion.* Wherefore it came to pass that, under the shelter of the civil arm and of the fanatical credulity of the nation at large, these marvellous legends grew up in perfect security from the attacks of doubt and of honest inquiry.

Traditions unfavorable to Mahomet became obsolete.

K.—The converse principle is likewise true; that is to say, traditions, founded upon good evidence, and undisputed because notorious in the first days of Islam, gradually fell into disrepute, or were entirely rejected, because they appeared to dishonour Mahomet, or countenance some heretical opinion. The nature of the case renders it impossible to prove this position so fully as the preceding ones, since we can now have no trace of such traditions as were early dropped. But we discover vestiges of a spirit that would necessarily produce such results, working even in the

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* The Arabic student will find this well illustrated by the treatment which the "hypocrites" or "disaffected" are represented as receiving even during Mahomet's life-time. On the expedition to Tabûk, Mahomet prayed for rain, which accordingly descended. A perverse doubter, however, said, "It was but a chance cloud that happened to pass." Shortly after, the Prophet's camel strayed; again the doubter said, "Doth not Mahomet deem himself a Prophet? He professeth to bring intelligence to you from the Heavens; yet is he unable to tell where his own camel is!" "Ye servants of the Lord!" exclaimed his comrade, "there is a plague in this place, and I knew it not. Get out from my tent, enemy of the Lord! Wretch, remain not in my presence!" Mahomet had of course, in due time, *supernatural* intimation conveyed to him not only of the doubter's speech, but of the spot where the camel was; and the doubter afterwards repented, and was confirmed in the faith. *Hishâmi*, p. 391.

Omar's sword was readily unsheathed to punish such sceptical temerity, and Mahomet himself frequently visited it in the early part of his Medîna career with assassination, and on the conquest of Mecca by open execution.

second and third centuries. There is an apparently well-supported story which attributes to Mahomet a momentary lapse and compromise with the idolatry of Mecca; and traditions on the subject from various sources are related by the earliest and the best historians. But theologians began to deem the opinion dangerous or heretical that Mahomet should have thus degraded himself "after he had received the truth," and the occurrence is therefore denied, or entirely omitted, by some of the earliest and by most of the later biographers of the Prophet, though the facts are so patent that the more candid fully admit them.* The principle thus found in existence in the second and third centuries, may be presumed to have been at work also in the first.

Pious frauds allowable in Islam.

L.—The system of *pious frauds* is not abhorrent from the axioms of Islam. Deception, by the current theology of Mahometans, is allowable in certain circumstances. The Prophet himself, by precept as well as by example, encouraged the notion that to tell an untruth is on some occasions allowable; and what occasion would approve itself as more justifiable, nay meritorious, than that of furthering the interests of Islam?† The early Moslems

* Dr. Sprenger has some valuable remarks on this subject in his notice of Tabari; *Asiatic Journal*, No. ccxii. p. 19, *et. seq.* The story of the lapse is honestly told by Wâckidi and Tabari, and (as we find by a quotation in the latter) by Ibn Ishâc; but it is entirely and tacitly omitted by Ibn Hishâm, although his book professes to embrace that of Ibn Ishâc. *Vide Kâtib al Wâckidi*, p. 29; *Tabari*, p. 10; and *Sprenger's Mohammed*, p. 184.

The author of the *Mawâhib Alladoniya*, in an interesting passage in elucidation of the authenticity of the story, traces the objections and doubts to fear of heresy and injury to Islam; thus;— قد قيل ان هذه القصة من وضع الزنادقة لا اصل لها و ليس كذلك بل لها اصل "It is said that this story is of a heretical character and has no foundation. But it is not so; it is really well founded." And again,— ثم رده من طريق النظر بان ذلك لو وقع لا رتد كثير من اسلم قال و لم ينقل ذلك —"Again (another author) rejects it on the ground that if it had really happened, many of those who had believed would have become apostates, which was not the case."

† The common Moslem belief is that it is allowable to tell a falsehood on four occasions: 1st, to save one's life; 2nd, to effect a peace or reconciliation; 3rd, to persuade a woman; 4th, on the occasion of a journey or expedition.

would suppose it to be fitting and right that a divine religion should be supported by the evidence of miracles, and they no doubt believed that they were doing God service by building up testimony in accordance with so laudable a supposition. The case of our own religion, whose purer morality renders the attempt incomparably less excusable, shows that pious fabrications of this description easily commend themselves to the conscience, where there is the inclination and the opportunity for their perpetration.

Difficulty of distinguishing conscientious witnesses from amongst the originators of tradition.

There were indeed conscientious persons among the early Moslems, who would probably have scrupled at such open fraud; but these are the very individuals from whom we have the fewest traditions. We read of some cautious men among the Companions who, perceiving the difficulty of reciting accounts of their Prophet with perfect accuracy, and perhaps disgusted with the barefaced effrontery of the ordinary propagators of garbled and unfounded traditions, abstained entirely from repeating the sayings of Mahomet.*

The *first* is borne out by Mahomet's express sanction. Ammâr ibn Yâsir was sorely persecuted by the pagans of Mecca, and denied the faith for his deliverance. The Prophet approved of his conduct:—"If they do this again, *then repeat the same recantation to them again.*" *Kâtib al Wâckidi*, p. 227½. Another tradition preserved in the family of Yâsir, is as follows:—"The idolators seized Ammâr, and they let him not go until he had abused Mahomet and spoken well of their gods. He then repaired to the Prophet, who asked of him what had happened."—"Evil, oh Prophet of the Lord! I was not let go until I had abused thee, and spoken well of their gods."—"But how," replied Mahomet, "dost thou find thine own heart?"—"Secure and stedfast in the faith."—"*Then*," said Mahomet, "*if they repeat the same, do thou too repeat the same.*" *Ibid.* Mahomet also said that Ammâr's *lie* was better than Abu Jahl's *truth*.

The *second* is directly sanctioned by the following tradition:—"That person is not a liar who makes peace between two people, and speaks good words to do away their quarrel, *although they should be lies.* "*Mishcat*, vol. ii. p. 427.

As to the *third*, we have a melancholy instance that Mahomet did not think it wrong to make false promises to his wives, in the matter of Mary his Egyptian maid. And regarding the *fourth*, it was his *constant* habit in projecting expeditions (excepting only that to Tabûk) to conceal his intentions, and to give out that he was about to proceed in another direction from the true one. *Hishâmi*, p. 392; *Kâtib al Wâckidi*, p. 133½.

* Thus Omar declined to give certain information, saying, "If it were not that I feared lest I should add to the facts in relating them, or take therefrom, verily I would tell you." *Kâtib al Wâckidi*, p. 236½. Similar tra-

But regarding those Companions from whom the great mass of tradition is drawn, and their immediate successors, it does not appear that we are now in possession of any satisfactory means for dividing them into separate classes, of which the trustworthiness would vary to any great extent. With respect, indeed, to some it is known that they were more constantly than others with Mahomet, and had therefore better opportunities for acquiring information; some, like the garrulous Ayesha, were specially given to gossiping tales and trifling frivolities; but none of them, as far as we can judge, was free from the tendency to glorify Mahomet at the expense of truth, or could be withheld from the marvellous, by the most glaring violations of probability or of reason. Such at least is the impression derived from their evidence in the shape *in which it has reached us.**

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ditions are given regarding Othmân. *Ibid.* p. 168½, 189½. See one of these quoted above at p 28, note.

Abdallah ibn Masûd was so afraid in repeating Mahomet's words, that he always guarded his relation by the conditional clause, "he spake something like this, or near unto it;" but one day, as he repeated a tradition, the unconditional formulâ of repetition,— قال محمد رسول الله "*thus spake the Prophet of the Lord*"—escaped his lips, and he became oppressed with anguish, so that the sweat dropped from his forehead. Then he said, "If the Lord so will, the Prophet may have said more than that, or less, or near unto it." *Ibid.* p. 209. This is no doubt greatly exaggerated.

"*Saad ibn Abi Wackkás* was asked a question and he kept silence, saying *I fear that if I tell you one thing, ye will go and add thereto, as from me, a hundred.*" *Ibid.* p. 206½. Thus also one enquired of *Abdallah ibn Zobeir*, "Why do we not hear thee telling anecdotes regarding the Prophet, as such and such persons tell?" He replied, "It is very true that I kept close by the Prophet from the time I first believed, (and therefore am intimately acquainted with his words); but I heard him say, 'Whosoever shall repeat a lie concerning me, his resting place shall be in hell-fire." *Ibid.* p. 199. So in explaining why several of the principal Companions have left no traditions, Wâckidi writes, "From some there are no remains of tradition regarding the Prophet, although they were more in his company, sitting and hearing him, than others who have left us many traditions, *and this we attribute to their fear*" (of giving forth erroneous traditions,) &c. *Ibid.* p. 176½.

* It is *possible* that farther investigation may bring to light facts on which some principle of classification of the early traditionists, as trustworthy or otherwise, may be based. Thus Dr. Sprenger writes;—"As it is of great importance to know the character of the witnesses, I intend to

Examples of capricious fabrication.

M.—The aberrations from the truth hitherto noticed are presumed to have proceeded from some species of bias, the nature of which I have been endeavouring to trace. But the testimony of the Companions, as delivered to us, is so unaccountably fickle and capricious that, even where no motive whatever can be guessed at, and where there were the fullest opportunities of observation, the traditions often flatly contradict one another. For instance, a score of witnesses affirm that Mahomet dyed his hair; they mention the substances used; some not only maintain that they were eye-witnesses of the fact during the Prophet's life, but produce after his death relics of hair on which the dye was visible. A score of others, possessing equally good means of information, assert that he *never* dyed his hair, and that moreover he had no need to do so, as his grey-hairs were so few that they might be counted.* Again, with respect to his *Signet ring*—a matter involving no faction, family interest, or dogma—the traditions are most discordant. One party relate that, feeling the want of a

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embrace the first opportunity which I may have to publish the notes which I have collected on the inventors of miracles and of legends regarding Mohammed." *Second Notice of Waqidy*, p. 19. But after all there is not much prospect of material advantage from such enquiries, since the worst description of bias—that, namely, which tends to glorify Mahomet—pervades the *whole* of Mohametan tradition.

* *Vide Kâtib al Wâckidi*, pp. 83½–85. Even the exact number of his white hairs is given by different authorities variously, as 17, 18, 20, or 30. Some say that when he oiled his head they appeared; others that the process of oiling concealed them. As to the color used, the accounts also differ. One says he employed Henna and Katam which gave a reddish tinge, but that he liked *yellow* best. One traditionist approves of a jet black dye, while others say the Prophet forbade this.

The following traditions on the subject are curious:—Mahomet said, "Those who dye their hair black like the crops of pigeons, shall never smell the smell of Paradise." "In the day of judgment, the Lord will not look upon him who dyes his hair black."

A grey-headed man one day approached the Prophet with his hair dyed black. Mahomet not recognizing him, asked who he was. The man gave his name. "Nay," replied the Prophet, "*but thou art the Devil!*" The only supposition (apart from wanton and gratuitous fabrication,) which one can imagine to account for these contrary traditions, is that they were invented by grey-headed men to countenance and sanction the several modes of dyeing practised by themselves!

seal for his despatches, the Prophet had a signet ring prepared for that purpose, of pure silver. Another party assert that Khâlid ibn Saîd made for himself an iron ring plated with silver; and that Mahomet, taking a fancy to the ring, appropriated it to his own use. A third tradition states, that the ring was brought by Amr bin Saîd from Abyssinia; and a fourth, that Muâdz ibn Jabal had it engraved for himself in Yemen. One set of traditions hold that Mahomet wore this ring on his right hand, another on his left; one that he wore the seal inside, others that he wore it outside; one that the inscription upon it was صدق الله, while the rest declare that it was محمد رسول الله.* Now all these traditions refer to one and the same ring; because it is repeatedly added that, after Mahomet's death, it was worn by Abu Bacr, by Omar, and by Othmân, and was lost by the latter in the well Arîs. There is yet another tradition that neither the Prophet nor any of his immediate successors ever wore a ring at all.† Now all these varying narratives are not given doubtfully, as conjectures which might either be right or wrong, but they are told with the full assurance of apparent certainty, and with such minute particulars and circumstantiality of detail as leave the impression on the simple reader's mind that each of the narrators had the most intimate acquaintance with the subject.

In these instances, which might be indefinitely multiplied, to what tendency or habit of mind, but the sheer love of story-telling, are we to attribute such gratuitous and wholesale fabrications? And from this we may fairly deduce the principle that tradition cannot in general be received with too much caution, or exposed to too rigorous a criticism; and that no important statement should be received as securely proved by tradition only, unless there be some farther ground of probability, analogy, or collateral evidence in its favour.

Unsupported tradition is insufficient evidence.

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* See the interesting paper by M. Belin in the *Journal Asiatique*, regarding the seal of Mahomet upon his letter to the Egyptian governor, Macoucas, the supposed original of which was discovered by M. Barthélemy in a Coptic monastery. It seems desirable that the genuineness of this singularly discovered document should be farther discussed by the scholars of Europe.

† All these traditions will be found in *Kâtib al Wâckidi*, pp. 91½–92½.

III. What considerations confirm individual traditions?

III. I will now proceed to mention the considerations which should be regarded as *confirming* the credit of a tradition, as well as the caution to be observed in their application.

Agreement between independent traditions.

A.—Unanimous consent, or general agreement, between traditions independent of one another, or which, though traceable to a common origin, have descended by different chains of witnesses, may generally be regarded as a presumption of credibility. We know that the first sources of tradition were numerous; and, as already stated, the stream often flows through separate channels. Evidence of this description may therefore afford a cumulative presumption that the circumstances common to so many separate traditions were currently reported or believed at the point of divergence, that is, in the era immediately succeeding Mahomet's death. But there is a danger to be here guarded against; for, in traditions apparently of the nature contemplated, close agreement may be even a ground of distrust. It may argue that, though attributed to different sources, the traditions really belong to one and the same family, perhaps of spurious origin, long subsequent to the time of Mahomet. If the uniformity be so great as to exclude circumstantial variety, it will be strong ground for believing that either the common source is not of old date, or that the channels of conveyance have not been kept distinct. Some degree of incidental discrepancy must be looked for, and it will improve rather than injure the character of the evidence. Thus the frequent variations in the day of the week on which remarkable events are stated to have occurred, are just what we should expect in independent traditions having their origin in hearsay; and the simplicity with which these are placed in juxtaposition, speaks strongly for the honesty of the Collectors in having gathered them *bonâ fide* from various and independent sources, as well as in having refrained from any attempt to blend or harmonize the differing accounts.

Agreement between portions only of independent traditions.

The same argument may be applied to the several parts of a tradition. Certain portions of distinct versions regarding the same subject-matter may agree almost verbally together, while other portions may contain circumstantial variations; and it is possible that the latter may have a *bonâ fide* independent origin, which the former could not pretend to. The intimate union, in

separate but corresponding traditions, of fabulous narrations characterized by a suspicious uniformity, and of well-grounded facts circumstantially varying, receives an excellent illustration from the story of Mahomet's infantile days, which professes to have been derived from his nurse Halîma, and handed down to us in three distinct traditions. "These three accounts," says Dr. Sprenger, "agree almost literally in the marvellous, but they differ in the facts."* The *marvellous* was derived from one common source of fabrication, but the *facts* from original authorities. Hence the uniformity of the one, and the variation in the other.

Verbal coincidence may point to a common written original.

Entire verbal coincidence may sometimes involve a species of evidence peculiar to itself; it may point to a common *recorded* original, of date antecedent to that probably at which most of the other traditions were reduced to writing. There is no reason for believing that any such records were made till long after the era of Mahomet, and they can therefore assume none of the merit of contemporaneous remains. But they may claim the advantage of a greater antiquity of record than the mass of ordinary tradition, as in the case of the history by Zohri of the Prophet's military conquests, which was probably recorded about the close of the first century.†

Correspondence with the Coran a valuable confirmation.

B.—Correspondence at any point with facts mentioned or alluded to in the Coran will generally impart credit in whole or in part to the traditional narrative. Some of the most important incidents connected with Mahomet's battles and campaigns, as well as with a variety of domestic and political matters, are thus attested. Such apparent confirmation may however be deceptive, for the allusion in the Coran may have *given rise* to the tradition. The story, if not from the first an actual fraud, may have originated in some illustrative supposition or paraphrastic comment on the text; and, gradually changing its character, been transmitted to posterity as a confident recital of fact. Take for example the following verse in the Coran:—*Remember the favour of thy Lord unto thee, when certain men designed to stretch forth their hands upon thee, and the Lord held back from thee their hands.*‡ By some this

* *Vide Sprenger's Life of Mahommed*, p. 78, note 3.

† This will be farther noticed below, p. lxxxviii.

‡ Sura, v. 12.

passage is supposed to refer to Mahomet's escape from Mecca; but, the craving after the circumstantial and the marvellous not being satisfied with this tame and reasonable interpretation, several different occasions have been invented on which the *hand* of the enemy, in the very act of brandishing a sword over Mahomet's head, was miraculously stayed by Gabriel.* Again, the discomfiture of the army of Abraha shortly before the birth of Mahomet, is thus poetically celebrated in Sura cv;—*And did not the Lord send against them flocks of little birds, which cast upon them small clay stones, and made them like unto the stubble of which the cattle have eaten?* This appears to be only a highly coloured metaphor for the general destruction of the army by the ravages of small-pox or some similar pestilential calamity.† But it has afforded a starting point for the extravagances of tradition, which gives a detailed statement of the species of bird, the size and material of the stones, the precise mode in which they struck the enemy, the exact kind of wound inflicted, &c., as if the portent

* In the attack upon the Bani Ghatfân, we learn from Wâckidi that whilst Mahomet was resting under a tree, the enemy's leader came stealthily up and snatching his sword, exclaimed—"Who is there to defend thee against me this day?" "The Lord;" replied the Prophet. Thereupon Gabriel struck the man upon his chest, and the sword falling from his hand, Mahomet in his turn seized it and retorted the question on his adversary, who immediately became a convert; "and *with reference to this*," it is added, "*was Sura* v. 12 *revealed.*" *Kâtib al Wâckidi*, p. 104½. *Vide* also *Weil's Mohammed*, p. 121, where the story is related; but in a subsequent passage that author (on account of the numerous attempts at assassination and marvellous escapes his biographers tell of Mahomet,) not without reason regrets the respect with which he had treated it; p. 257, note 39.

The tale is a second time clumsily repeated by the biographers almost in the same terms, on the occasion of his expedition to Dzât al Ricâ; and here Hishâmi adds,—"With special reference to this event, Sura v. 12 was revealed, but others attribute the passage to the attempt of Amr ibn Jahsh, one of the Bani Nadhîr," who it is pretended tried to roll down a stone upon the Prophet from the roof of a house. *Hishâmi*, p. 283; *Kâtib al Wâckidi*, p. 110½; compare also *Sale's* note on the verse.

Thus we have three or four different incidents to which the passage is applied, *some of which are evidently fabricated to suit the passage itself.*

† The metaphor was probably suggested (as we shall see below) by the name for small-pox حصبة signifying also "small stones." The name is probably connected with the hard and gravelly feeling of the pustules. See *Hishâmi*, p. 19.

had but just occurred within sight of the narrators;—and yet the whole has evidently no other foundation than the verse above quoted, which the credulous Moslems interpreting literally, deemed it necessary to clothe with ample illustration. These are types of the numberless puerile or romantic legends which have been fabricated out of nothing; and which, though purely imaginary, have been reared upon the authority of a Coranic basis.*

Disparagement of Mahomet a ground of credibility.

C.—When a tradition contains statements in disparagement of Mahomet, such as an indignity shown to him by his followers; or an insult from his enemies after his emigration (for then the period of his humiliation had passed, and that of his exaltation arrived); his failure in any enterprise or laudable endeavour; or, in fine, anything at variance either in fact or doctrine with the principles and tendencies of Islam, there will be strong reason for admitting it as authentic: because, otherwise, it seems hardly credible that such a tradition could be fabricated, or having been fabricated, that it could obtain currency among the followers of Mahomet. At the same time we must be careful not to apply the rule to all that is considered *by ourselves* discreditable or opposed to morality. Cruelty however inhuman, and revenge the most implacable, *when practised against infidels*, were regarded by the first followers of Islam as highly meritorious; and the rude civilization of Arabia admitted with complacency a coarseness of language and behaviour, which we should look upon as reprehensible indecency. These and similar exceptions must be made from this otherwise universal and effective canon.

Treaties contemporaneously recorded.

D.—There is embodied in tradition a source of information far more authentic than any yet alluded to, though unfortunately of very limited extent,—I mean the transcripts of treaties purporting to have been dictated by Mahomet, and recorded in his presence.

Their authority far superior to that of ordinary tradition;

It has been before shown that ordinary traditions were not recorded in the time of Mahomet; and that, even were we to admit an occasional resort to such early notes or memoranda, there is no evidence regarding their subsequent fate, nor any

* As illustrative of similarly fabricated stories in the early history of our Church, the legend of St. Paul's battle with the wild beasts (Niceph. H.E. ii. 25) may be referred to as growing out of 1 Cor. xv. 31. See *Stanley on the Corinthians in loco.*

criteria for distinguishing out of our present stores the traditions possibly founded upon them, from those that originated and were for a long time sustained by purely oral means. To a very different category belong the treaties of Mahomet. They consist of compacts entered into with the surrounding tribes of Arabia, Jewish and Christian, as well as Pagan and Moslem; these were at the time reduced to writing, and attested by one or more of his followers. They are of course confined to the period succeeding the Prophet's flight to Medîna and acquisition of political influence, and from their nature are limited to the recital of a few simple facts. But these facts again form valuable supports to the traditional outline; and, especially where they detail the relations of Islam with the neighbouring Jewish and Christian tribes, are possessed of the highest interest.

especially in regard to Jewish and Christian tribes.

In the Kâtib al Wâckidi's biography there is a section expressly devoted to the transcription of such treaties, and it contains two or three scores of them. Over and again, the author (in the end of the second or beginning of the third century) states that he had copied these from the *original* documents, or recorded their purport from the testimony of those who had seen them.* "They were still in force," writes Dr. Sprenger, "in the time of Hârûn Al Rashîd (A.H. 170—193), and were then collected."* This is quite conceivable, for they were often recorded upon leather,† and would invariably be preserved with care as their charters of privilege by those in whose favour they were concluded. Some of the most interesting, as the terms allowed to the Jews of Kheibar and to the Christians of Najrân, formed the basis of political events in the caliphates of Abu Bacr and Omar; the concessions made in others to Jewish and Christian tribes, are satisfactory proof that they were not fabricated by Mahometans; while it is equally clear that they would never have been acknowledged or made current by them if counterfeited by a Jewish or a Christian hand.

Whenever, then, there is fair evidence in favour of such treaties, they may be placed, as to historical authority, almost on a par with the Coran ‡

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* *Sprenger's Mohammed*, p. 63.

† Instances have been given above; p. xii. note 2.

‡ The following are the chief references in the *Kâtib al Wâckidi* to the *originals* of such treaties as extant in his time:—

The narrative of official deputations to Mahomet is sometimes stated to have been derived from the family, or tribe which sent the embassy, and which had preserved a written memorial of the circumstances. Accounts so obtained may undoubtedly be viewed as founded on fact, for the family or clan would naturally treasure up in the most careful way any memorials of the manner in which the Prophet had received and honoured them, although there would be a tendency in all such statements to self-aggrandizement.* Written details of embassies preserved in the several tribes which sent them.

E.—Another traditionary source, supported by authority peculiar to itself, takes rise in the verses and poetical fragments attributed to the time of Mahomet. Some of these profess to be the composition of persons who died before the Prophet, as Abu Poetical remains carry a special authority. 1. Such as are ascribed to a period before the rise of Mahomet.

1. Hishâm ibn Mohammed relates that a man of the Tai tribe told him that Walîd ibn Jâbir sent an embassy to Mahomet, who wrote to them a letter then extant and in the possession of his tribe at Jabalein. *Kâtib al Wâckidi*, p. 54.

2. Wâckidi gives a copy of the treaty Mahomet entered into with the chief of Dûmat al Jandal, the original of which an old man of the people of Dûma showed him. *Ibid.* p. 56½.

3. Wâckidi took the copy of a letter (apparently original) addressed by Mahomet to the people of Adzruh (a Jewish settlement on the Aelanitic gulph) and gives the words of it. *Ibid.* p. 57.

4. Mahomet gave to Rufâd ibn Amr ibn Jadah al Fulj, a written treaty, "which that family now possesses." *Ibid.* p. 59½.

5. Zoheir, who came from Mahrah to Mahomet, got from him a written treaty "which is with the family to this day." *Ibid.* p. 69.

Wâckidi read the original document in which Arcam, one of the Companions, devoted his house (famous in the Prophet's Meccan history) to sacred purposes. *Ibid.* p. 226.

Besides these, there are a great number of treaties and letters to the various chiefs and tribes in Arabia, introduced *in extenso*, into the biographical writings; and, although it is not expressly so stated, it is extremely probable that these were in many cases copied from the originals; or from transcripts of them, which though perhaps removed several steps from the originals, are still likely to have been genuine. Counterfeits there may be amongst them, but the wonder is that, considering their value, fabricated documents of this nature are not more numerous. The reason of their limited number appears to have been the difficulty of counterfeiting such written relics in the early age of Islam with any chance of success.

* Thus the secretary of Wâckidi details such a narrative with the preface —"My informant, Muhammad ibn Yahya relates, *that he found it in the writings* of his father;" and again "Amr the Odzrite says, he *found it written in the papers* of his father." The story that follows relates to a deputation from the Bani Odzara. *Kâtib al Wâckidi*, pp. 64½ & 12.

Tâlib his uncle; others, of those who survived him, as Hassân ibn Thâbit, a poet of Medîna. There can be no question as to the great antiquity of these remains, though we may not always be able to fix with exactness the period of their composition. With respect to those which purport to be of date *preceding* the rise to power of Mahomet, when we consider the poetical habits of the nation, their faculty of preserving poetry by memory,* the ancient style and language of the pieces themselves, the fair likelihood that carefully composed verses were at the first committed for greater security to writing, it cannot certainly be deemed improbable that such poems or fragments should in reality have been composed by the parties to whom they are ascribed. It is, on the other hand, possible that poetry of date long after the death of Mahomet, but descriptive of passages in his life or connected with it, may gradually have come to be regarded as composed upon the occasion by some contemporary poet, or as the actual effusion of personages in the scene to whom the real author attributed them by poetical fiction alone. As a general rule, it may be laid down that wherever there is betrayed an anticipation of Mahomet's prophetical dignity or victories,—the premonitory dawn of approaching glory,—the poetry may at once be concluded as an afterthought, triumphant Islam having reflected some rays of its refulgence upon the bare points of its earlier career. Tried by this rule, there are fragments which may be ascribed, as more or less genuine, to the men whose name they bear; but there is also much which from patent anachronism either in fact or spirit, is evidently the composition of a later age.† The question how-

* Burkhardt's testimony shows that the faculty still remains. "Throughout every part of the Arabian desert poetry is equally esteemed. Many persons are found who make verses of true measure, although they cannot either read or write; yet as they employ on such occasions chosen terms only, and as the purity of their vernacular language is such as to preclude any grammatical errors, these verses, after passing from mouth to mouth, may at last be committed to paper, and will most commonly be found regular and correct. I presume that the greater part of the regular poetry of the Arabs, which has descended to us, is derived from similar compositions." *Burkhardt's Notes on the Bedouins*, vol. i. p. 251; see also p. 373.

† As an example I may refer to the poetry which Abu Tâlib, Mahomet's uncle, is said to have recited when the Coreish took decisive measures against the Prophet, and sought to warn the pilgrims of other tribes not to

ever is one of literary curiosity rather than of historical evidence; for this species of poetry is seldom of use in confirming any important point in the biography of Mahomet. Not of very great pactical value.

I do not here refer to the *national* poets of Arabia, whose verses, preserved in the Kitâb al Aghâni and other works, possess without doubt the elements of authenticity, and form trustworthy archives These remarks not applicable to the national poetry of Arabia.

give heed to him. Abu Tâlib, in plaintive verse, expresses his fears lest the whole of the Arabs should join the Coreish against him. *Hishâmi*, p. 75. There is in these verses something perhaps too plainly anticipative of the future national struggle; still the language from Abu Tâlib's stand-point is *possible*. At the close there is a couplet with a reference to "the *clouds giving rain before him*," *i.e.* Mahomet: and it is added in explanation by the biographer that when the Prophet in after days miraculously procured rain in answer to his prayer at Medîna, he called to mind this prediction by his uncle. Thus, the doubt is cast upon the whole piece of its being an after-composition. At the same time it is not impossible that the suspicious words may have been used *metaphorically* by Abu Tâlib in laudation of his nephew, or that the couplet containing them may have been interpolated.

I will instance another glaring anachronism which shows with what caution poetry of this class must be received. When Mahomet with his followers performed the pilgrimage to Mecca under the treaty of Hodeibia, the leader of his camel, as he encircled the Kaaba, shouted verses of hostile defiance against the Coreish, who had retired by compact to the over-hanging rocks and thence viewed the Prophet and his people. Among these verses was the couplet, "We shall slay you on the score of the interpretation of it (the Coran), as we slew you on the score of its revelation (*i.e.* for rejecting it); نحن قتلناكم على تاويله * كما قتلناكم على تنزيله Now this evidently belongs to a period long subsequent, when Islam was broken up into parties, and men fought against each other for their several "interpretations" of the Coran, and looked back to the struggle with the idolators of Mecca as to a bygone era. Yet the verses are ascribed both by Wâckidi and Hishâmi to the Hodeibia armistice, *i.e.* a period anterior even to the conquest of Mecca. *Kâtib al Wâckidi*, p. 124 and 282½; *Hishâmi*, p. 347. Ibn Hishâm, however, seeing probably the clumsiness of the tradition, adds that it is a mistake, the poetry being referable to another person.

As a farther example, the Arabic scholar may peruse the rhetorical contest before Mahomet held between his own followers and the embassy of the Bani Tamîm. *Hishâmi*, p. 416–419. The anticipations of universal conquest are there too prematurely developed in the orations of the Mahometan party. Thus the threat is used by Thâbit ibn Keis that the Moslems "*would fight against all the world till they were converted*" (p. 416). This was language appropriate only to the time when the Arabs had begun to fight and conquer beyond Arabia. The speeches and poems may have been composed afterwards as suitable to the occasion, and like the orations of classical history, attributed to the speakers of the original scene.

of Arabia, before Islam. It is only necessary to peruse the elaborate "Essai" of M. Caussin de Perceval to be satisfied of the general authority of these poetical fragments.

Poets who survived Mahomet.

Pieces said to have been recited by poets who *survived Mahomet*, there is every reason for believing to be the composition ordinarily of the persons to whom they are ascribed. But whether they were composed before the Prophet's death, even when they are said to be so, is a more difficult question; and their value as historical documents will in some measure be regulated by that consideration. Under any circumstances, however, they cannot but be regarded as of great value, from their being the work of Mahomet's contemporaries. Wherever they bear upon historical events, they are of much use as adding confirmation to the corresponding traditions; for, whether handed down by writing, or by memory alone, their poetical form is a material safeguard against change or interpolation. As examples, may be specified the odes of Hassân ibn Thâbit on the "Battle of the Ditch," and on "the taking of Mecca;" and the poem of Káb ibn Mâlik, descriptive of the oath of fealty by the Medîna converts at the "second pledge of Acaba," in which he mentions by name the twelve leaders chosen by the Prophet.* Besides such specific facts, this early poetry is often instructive, from its exhibition of the *spirit* of the first Moslems

* Káb survived Mahomet, and wrote an elegy on his death. *Kâtib al Wâckidi*, p. 166½. Hassân ibn Thâbit was an inhabitant of Medîna; he was converted during the Prophet's life-time, and survived him about half a century. A good instance of the incidental manner in which his verses corroborate tradition, is that of his elegy on Mutîm, in whose praise he notices that he received the Prophet under his protection when he returned to Mecca from Nakhla and Tâif, dispirited and friendless. *Hishâmi*, p. 139. A quotation will be given from the elegy in chap. vi.

A curious anecdote occurs of the mode in which Hassân's poetry is said to have *originated* an erroneous tradition. In his piece upon Mahomet's expedition to Al Ghâba (or Dzûl Carada) against a party of maraunders, he speaks of *the horsemen of Al Mikdâd*, as if he had been the chief of this expedition. In reality, however, Saad ibn Zeid was chief, having been put in the command by Mahomet. On hearing the poetry recited, the latter repaired in great wrath to Hassân, and required amends for the misrepresentation. The poet quietly replied, that his name did not suit the rhythm, and therefore he had chosen Mikdâd's. Nevertheless, says Wâckidi, the verses gave currency to the tradition in favour of the latter. *Kâtib al Wâckidi*, p. 115½.

towards their unconverted brethren, and the biting satire and virulent abuse employed against the enemies of Islam.

There is probably, however, no biographical fact, the proof of which depends solely upon these poetical remains. They are valuable because *confirmatory* of tradition; but their practical bearing upon the biography of Mahomet is not of so much interest as might have been expected. They deserve indeed deep attention, as the earliest literary remains of a period which contained the germ of such mighty events; but they give us little *new* insight into the history or character of the Prophet. While they attest many facts we are already acquainted with, they reveal none which, without them, we should not have known. Their poetry simply confirmatory of tradition.

Such, then, are the criteria which should be applied to Mahometan Tradition. It is obvious that the technical rule of "respectable names" used by the Collectors can carry no authority with us; that every tradition, separately subjected to close examination, must stand or fall upon its own merits; and that, even after its reception as *generally* credible, the component parts are still severally liable, upon a close scrutiny of internal evidence, to suspicion and rejection. The sure and steady light of the Coran will always be preferred by the judicious historian of the rise of Islam, to the more pretending glare of Tradition. Where the latter is alone available, his eye will maintain a constant guard against its dazzling but deceptive lustre, and will seek cautiously to discriminate and carefully to concentrate the fitful and scattered gleams of truth, which mingle with its fictitious illumination. By the prudent and uniform observance of the precautions which have been pointed out, while he shuns the misdirection of the traditionists, he will to the utmost of his ability preserve the elements of truth which have been handed down in their writings. Conclusion.

I now proceed to notice briefly the EARLY HISTORIANS OF MAHOMET, the character of their works, and the nature and value of the materials which they contain for a faithful biography. EARLY BIOGRAPHIES.

We have seen that towards the end of the first century of the Hegira, there is ground for believing that the general practice first commenced of recording Mahometan tradition. One of the *Zohri*, and other compilers of biographical collections.

persons known to have been employed in this task was *Zohri*, who died A.H. 124, aged 72.* It has been even stated that both he and his master Orwa (who died as early as A.H. 94,) composed regular biographies of Mahomet; but the grounds are uncertain.† Be this as it may, there is no doubt that Zohri at least threw together traditions bearing on certain periods of the Prophet's life, certainly on that relating to his military career. It is conjectured by Dr. Sprenger, that this compilation was the source whence arose the uniformity of narrative and coincidence of expression observable in many parts of the various biographies of Mahomet, and especially in the narratives of his expeditions and battles. The hypothesis is probable; at all events Zohri was *one* of such sources. He lived at the court of several princes of the Ommeyad dynasty, and there is hence every reason to believe that his accounts are as unbiassed as could be expected from any Mussulman author. There is no work by Zohri extant, but he is largely quoted by subsequent biographers; and, if Dr. Sprenger's hypothesis be correct, their statements of Mahomet's military operations must be in great part the reproduction of materials composed by him.

Biographies not extant, compiled in the second century A.H.

Two other authors are mentioned as having written biographies of Mahomet early in the second century, namely MUSA IBN OCKBA and ABU MÁSHAR. Neither of their works is extant; but the

* *Vide Ibn Khallicân*, ii. 583.

† See an interesting note in the *Journal of the Asiatic Society*, by Dr. Sprenger, on this subject, No. v. of 1851, p. 395; see also his *Second Notice of Waqidy*, p. 15.

The authority regarding Orwa has been already quoted in a note at p. xxxiv.

Of Zohri Sprenger writes, in his *Second Notice*;—"Hâjî Khalîfa and others say that Zohri left a work on the biography of Mohammad; and Sohayly several times quotes it. There is no doubt that he collected an immense number of notes on the subject, and Ibn Ishâq refers to them in almost every chapter; but I doubt whether he left them arranged and in the shape of a book on his death, and think that like the Commentary on the Qoran ascribed to Ibn Abbâs, they were collected and arranged by a later hand."

In the *Second Notice* Sprenger traces another stereotyping hand in Shorahbîl ibn Sáad, who died A.H. 123, and was a celebrated authority for the "Campaigns and Life of the Prophet."

Sprenger adds—"To suppose that a *written* record (beyond memoranda) has reached the authors" of the 2nd century "would be an assertion which

latter is extensively referred to by Tabari.* To these may be added, as no longer available, the histories of ABU ISHÂC, who died A.H. 188, and MADAINI, who lived to the beginning of the third century. Though the latter published many works on Mahomet, not one of them is now known to exist.†

Extant biographies.

The earliest biographical writers, whose works are extant more or less in their original state, are:—I. Ibn Ishâc; II. Ibn Hishâm; III. Wâckidi, and his Secretary; IV. Tabari.

Difference between biographies and ordinary traditional collections.

These works, though professing, like the traditional collections, to be composed only of *traditions*, differ from them in the following particulars.‡ *First:*—The traditional matter is confined to biographical subjects, and is arranged in chronological order. Commencing with anticipatory and genealogical notices, the work generally advances to the birth of Mahomet, and traces him, with some degree of method, through every stage of his eventful life. To each step a separate chapter is devoted; and all traditions, which have any bearing on the special subject, are thrown together in that chapter, and arranged with more or less of intelligible sequence. But the example of the traditionist Collectors as to the quotation of their authorities is, with some exceptions, observed; namely, that each separate tradition must be supported by its original witness, and the chain of evidence specified which connects the biographer with that authority. This induces the same motley and fragmentary appearance, which distinguishes the traditional *collections*. The biographies may be compared to mosaics, the several traditions being adjusted and dovetailed so as to form one uniform history. The work resembles more a collection of "table talk," than a life. It is a compilation rather than an original composition.

First:—confined to biographical matter chronologically arranged.

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cannot be proved. The similarity of the earliest accounts can be sufficiently accounted for by assuming that they all come from the same place, and from the same school, and that some eminent persons took the lead in that school," p. 5. Still it is highly probable that there were regular compilations, of the nature referred to, as early at least as the time of Orwa.

* See the note, and *Second Notice* (p. 20) just referred to. Mûsa died A.H. 141; Abu Máshar, A.H. 175.

† *Sprenger's Mohammed*, p. 70.

‡ The biographical works are called *Siyar* or *Sírat*,—سير or سيرة,—while the general *collections* are termed حديث,—*Hadith*.

Second:—the traditions are sometimes formed into a connected narrative.

Secondly:—Traditions are sometimes fused together; or they are broken up and re-formed into a uniform narrative, by an adjustment of the various pieces. This is more particularly the case in descriptions of Mahomet's military life, where the expeditions are often detailed in unbroken narratives, the authorities for which are generally thrown together at the beginning.*

Third:—a measure of critical collation.

Thirdly:—This process at times induces some degree of critical collation between the purport or the expressions of the several traditions brought together. Where the authorities differ, we find the biographer occasionally stating his opinion as to which is the correct exposition of the facts. Verbal differences are sometimes mentioned, and various readings noted. Such minuteness of examination affords satisfactory evidence of the labour bestowed by the biographers in bringing together all authentic tradition which could possibly illustrate their subject, and of the scrupulous accuracy with which they recorded it.

The following detailed account of the four authors whose works are more or less extant, will enable the reader to form an estimate of their value as biographical authorities.

MUHAMMAD IBN ISHÂC;

I. MUHAMMAD IBN ISHÂC is the earliest biographer of whom any extensive remains, the authorship of which can certainly be distinguished, have reached us. He died in the year of Hegira 151,† fifteen years after the overthrow of the Ommeyad dynasty. His work was published under the auspices and influence of the Abbasside Princes, and was in fact composed "for the use" of the Caliph Al Mansûr, the second of that line.‡ Its accuracy has been

* Thus after recounting a number of separate series of rehearsers' names, each of which runs up to the time of Mahomet, the traditionist will go on to a uniform narrative framed from the whole, with such preface as the following:—"The traditions from these sources are intermixed and fused together in the following account," دخل بعضهم في بعض

† Ibn Khallicân gives several dates from A.H. 150 to 154; but mentions A.H. 151 as the likeliest. *Slane*, vol. ii. p. 678.

‡ *Vide Weil's Gesch. Chalifen*, vol. ii. p. 81. Ibn Cuteiba says, that Ibn Ishâc came to Abu Jafar (Mansûr) to Hîra, and wrote for him "*the Book of the Campaigns.*" Ibn Khallicân relates that "he put his *Maghâzi* in writing for the Caliph's use at Hîra; and thus the learned men of Kûfa had the advantage of hearing him read and explain it himself." *Slane*, vol. ii. p. 678.

impugned. But from the portions of his biography which have come down to us, there seems no ground for believing that he was less careful than other traditionists; while the high character generally ascribed to him, and the fact of his being uniformly quoted with confidence by later authors, leave little doubt that the aspersions cast upon him have no good foundation.*

In Ibn Khallicân we find the following testimonies in his favour:—"Muhammad ibn Ishâc is held by the majority of the learned as a sure authority in the traditions, and none can be

Testimonies to his authority.

* The unfavourable testimonies have been carefully collected, (and as it appears to me unduly magnified) by Dr. Sprenger, (p. 69,) who brings the following charges against Ibn Ishâc:—

1. "*He was not critical.*" The only proof, however, is the complaint of an author *of the eighth century* of the Hegira that he did not always mention the name of the Companions to whom the traditions are traced. But this does not necessarily imply a want of critical care, and is sometimes forced upon the author by the narrative style proper to the biographer.

2. *He invented new traditions.* In evidence there are adduced, *first*, a round-about testimony from Ibn Cuteiba, as follows:—"I heard Abu Hâtim say on the authority of Asmay, that Motamir said—'Take no tradition from Ibn Ishâc, *he is a great liar;*' *second*, a statement that Mâlik ibn Anas had an unfavourable opinion of him. But Dr. Sprenger does not mention that this unfavourable opinion was expressly ascribed to jealousy, Ibn Ishâc having boasted that he was "a doctor fit to cure the infirmities of Mâlik's traditions;" on which Mâlik, enraged, called him a *Dajjâl* (anti-christ), and said he would drive him out of the city. *Ibn Khallicân*, vol. ii. p. 678. Not much credit is therefore attachable to the opinion of Mâlik.

3. *He forged his authorities.* This serious charge is supported by absolutely no proof whatever. It rests solely on the following gossiping story, cited by Ibn Cuteiba and Ibn Khallicân, vol. ii. p. 678. "He gave one (or some) of his traditions on the authority of Fâtima wife of Hishâm, who, when informed of the circumstance, denied Ibn Ishâc's statement, saying, *Did he then go and visit my wife?*" There is really not a tittle of evidence beyond this.

4. *On the above accounts he was not relied on by early authors.* The testimonies quoted from Ibn Khallicân in the text appear to me fully to disprove this statement. Three authors are mentioned by Sprenger as not relying on him—Bokhâri, Muslim, and Wâckidi. As regards the latter, Dr. Sprenger seems to be mistaken, as Wâckidi does quote him, and not simply on genealogical subjects. As to Bokhâri, Sprenger should have quoted the full authority to which he refers, which is as follows:—"Though Al Bokhâri did not quote him (in his *Sahîh*), he nevertheless held him for a trustworthy traditionist." *Ibn Khallicân*, vol. ii. p. 678. Again,—"And Al Bokhâri himself cites him *in his history.*" *Ibid.* p. 677. This is exactly the

ignorant of the high character borne by his work—*the Maghâzi.** '*Whoever wishes to know the early Moslem conquests*,' says Zohri, '*let him refer to Ibn Ishac*,' and Al Bokhâri himself cites him in his history. Al Shâfi said, '*Whoever wishes to obtain a complete acquaintance with the early Moslem conquests, must borrow his information from Ibn Ishâc.*' Safyan ibn Oyaina declared that he never met any one who cast suspicions on Ibn Ishâc's recitals, and Shôba ibn al Hajjâj was heard to say, '*Muhammad ibn Ishâc is the Commander of the Faithful*,' meaning that he held that rank as a traditionist. * * * Al Sâjî mentions that Zohri's pupils had recourse to Muhammad Ibn Ishâc, whenever they had doubts

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mode in which we should have expected a Collector of original traditions to treat a biographical writer. With reference to Muslim, the passage on which Sprenger relies in Ibn Khallicân runs thus:—"And if Muslim ibn al Hajjâj cited only one of his traditions, it was on account of the attack which Mâlik ibn Anas had directed against him," alluding to the absurd story related above. *Ibid.* It must be remembered that the labours of Bokhâri, Muslim, &c. lay in another direction from those of our author, who was an historical *compiler*; they again were *recorders of original traditions*, and would naturally seek for them at first hand, and not from biographical compilations. And we see that Bokhâri did quote him, when he *came to write a history.*

Now these are positively all the proofs or presumptions brought by Dr. Sprenger in support of his charges. They appear to me quite inadequate; and are, at any rate, far more than counterbalanced by the almost universal reception the statements of Ibn Ishâc have met with in the Moslem world, since his own time to the present. Had he "invented new traditions," or "forged authorities," this would not have been the case.

Sprenger calls him "the father of Mohammedan mythology," and states that the Mahometans discerned in his writings an attempt to "shape the biography of their Prophet according to the notions of the Christians." I question the justice of these remarks, seeing that the doctrine and system of Ibn Ishâc are generally of the same type exactly as those of other traditionists and biographers, held by Sprenger himself to be independent of our author.

The conclusion of Sprenger is as follows:—"His object is to edify and amuse his readers, and to this object he sacrifices not only *truth*, but in some instances even common sense" (p. 69). *Common sense* is no very usual attribute of any of the traditionists or biographers, and Ibn Ishâc seems to have had just about as much of it as the rest. But any *sacrifice of truth* I do not believe to have been deliberately made by him, any more than by the honest Wâckidi and by other biographers, who all indulge almost equally in the preservation of lying legends.

* Or Treatise on the Military Expeditions of Mahomet.

respecting the exactness of any of the traditions delivered by their master; such was the confidence they placed in his excellent memory. It is stated that Yahya ibn Mâîn, Ahmad ibn Hanbal, and Yahya Sâîd al Kattân, considered Muhammad ibn Ishâc as a trustworthy authority, and quoted his traditions in proof of their legal doctrines. * * * It was from Ibn Ishâc's works that Ibn Hishâm extracted the materials of his biography of the Prophet, and every person who has treated on this subject has been obliged to take Ibn Ishâc for his authority and guide."*

One of the chief sources of subsequent biographies.

These testimonies are conclusive as to the popularity of Ibn Ishâc in the Moslem world, and of his general respectability as a writer. But the surest proof of his character and authority lies in the fact that his statements have been embodied in all subsequent biographies of Mahomet, excepting that of Wâckidi, who in comparison with others quotes sparingly from him; and that the two works of Ibn Ishâc and Wâckidi form the chief material out of which the only authentic narrative of the Prophet's actions has been framed.

Though not extant, its materials are largely available in Ibn Hishâm's biography.

No copy of Ibn Ishâc's biography, in the form of its original composition, is now available. But the materials have been so extensively adopted by Ibn Hishâm, and wrought into his history in so complete and unaltered a form, that we have probably not lost much by the absence of the work itself.

IBN HISHÂM:

II. IBN HISHÂM, who died A.H. 213,† made the labours of Ibn Ishâc the basis of his biography of Mahomet. Copies of this work are extant in its original form, and are known to the European historians of the Prophet. ‡

his character.

The following extract from Ibn Khallicân will place before the reader all that it is necessary to know regarding the life of this author:—"*Abu Muhammad, Abd al Mâlik, Ibn Hishâm*, the author of the *Sîrat al Rasûl*, or *Biography of the Prophet*, is spoken of in these terms by Abu'l-Câsim-al-Suhaili, in his work entitled *Al*

* *Ibn Khallicân*, by *Slane*, vol. ii. pp. 677-678.

† According to others, 218 A.H.

‡ "Even of this work copies are rare." *Sprenger*, p. 71. The fact is that the literary public among Mahometans do not affect the early and original sources of their Prophet's life, and hardly ever use them. They prefer the modern biographies with their marvellous tales.

Raud al Unuf, which is a commentary on the *Sîrat*. 'He was celebrated for his learning, and possessed superior information in genealogy and grammar. His native place was Old Cairo, but his family were of Basra. He composed a genealogical work on the tribe of Himyar and its princes; and I have been told that he wrote another work, in which he explained the obscure passages of poetry cited in (Ibn Ishâc's) biography of the Prophet. His death occurred at Old Cairo A.H. 213 (A.D. 828-9). This Ibn Hishâm is the person who extracted and drew up the 'History of the Prophet' from Ibn Ishâc's work, entitled *Al Maghâzi wa al Siar* ('The Wars and Life of Mahomet.') * Al Suhaili explained its difficulties in a commentary, and it is now found in the hands of the public under the title of *Sîrat ibn Hishâm, i.e.* 'The Biography of Mahomet, by Ibn Hishâm.' "*

Suspicions of his candour and fidelity.

There is reason to suspect that Ibn Hishâm was not so honest as his great authority Ibn Ishâc. Certainly one instance throws suspicion upon him as a witness, disinclined at the least to tell the *whole* truth. We find in a subsequent biographer, Tabari, *a quotation from Ibn Ishâc*, in which is described the temporary lapse of Mahomet towards idolatry; and the same incidents are also given by Wâckidi from other original sources. But no notice whatever of the remarkable fact appears in the biography of Ibn Hishâm, though it is professedly based upon the work of Ibn Ishâc.† His having thus studiously omitted all reference to so important a narrative, for no other reason apparently than because he fancied it to be discreditable to the Prophet, cannot but lessen our confidence generally in his book. Still, it is evident from a comparison of his text with the quotations in Tabari from the same passages of Ibn Ishâc, (the two ordinarily tallying word for word with each other,) that whatever he did except from his author was faithfully and accurately copied. ‡

* *Ibn Khallicân*, by *Slane*, vol. ii. p. 128.

† See above p. lxxiii, note.

‡ Dr. Sprenger writes of Ibn Hishâm:—"Unfortunately the additions of Ibn Hishâm are even less critical than the text of Ibn Ishâc." He adds that he was a pupil of Bakay, of whom he states on the authority of Samaâny, "that he made awful blunders, gave free scope to his imagination, and that his accounts cannot be considered conclusive unless they are confirmed by others." *Life of Mohammed*, p. 70. The latter qualification is, I fear,

The arrangement and composition of Ibn Hishâm are careful, if not elaborate. The traditions are well classified, and the narrative proceeds with much of the regularity of an ordinary European biography. The frequent fusion of traditions, however, renders it sometimes difficult to single out the separate authorities, and to judge of them on their individual merits. Arrangement and composition.

An abridgment of Ibn Hishâm's work was made at Damascus A.H. 707 (A.D. 1307), by one Ahmad ibn Ibrahim. A beautiful manuscript, *in the handwriting of the abbreviator himself*, is in the possession of Muhammad Sadr-ood-Deen, the Principal Sudder Ameen of Delhi. It is the copy which has been used by Dr. Sprenger,* and the same to which, (the author also having had access to it,) reference is made throughout this work.† A valuable manuscript of the entire work is in the library of the Asiatic Society in Calcutta. Abridgement to which reference is made throughout this work.

III. WÂCKIDI,—or as his full name runs *Abu Abdallah Muhammad ibn Omar al Wâckidi*,—was born at Medîna about the year of the Hegira 129 or 130, and died A.H. 207.‡ He studied and wrote exclusively under the Abbassides. He enjoyed their patronage, and passed a part of his life at their court, having in his later days been appointed a Câzi of Baghdad. In judging therefore of his learning and prejudices, we must always bear in mind that the influence of the Abbasside dynasty bore strongly and incessantly upon him. His traditional researches were vast, and his works voluminous.§ "Al Wâckidi was a man eminent for learning, and the author of some well-known works on the conquests of the Moslems, and other subjects. His *Kitab al Redda*, a work of no inferior merit, contains an account of the apostacy WÂCKIDI: character and writings.

applicable without exception to all the traditional biographers. But, as stated in the text, wherever Ibn Hishâm *quotes* Ibn Ishâc, he appears to do so with literal correctness.

* *Vide Sprenger's Mohammad*, p. 70, note 2.

† The abridgement consists chiefly in the omission of the authorities, *i.e.* of the series of witnesses leading up to the Companion who first gave forth the tradition.

‡ *Ibn Cuteiba.* Ibn Khallicân also gives this date as the true one, but mentions no other authorities, A.H. 206 and 209. *Slane*, vol. iii. p. 65.

§ *Sprenger's Mohammad*, p. 70, note 5. "He left at his death 600 boxes of books, each of which was a load for two men. The boxes made 120 camel loads."

of the Arabs on the death of the Prophet, and of the wars between his followers and Tuleiha al-Aswad and Museilama, the false prophet.* He received traditional information from Ibn abi-Dîb, Mamar ibn Râshid, Mâlik ibn Anas, Al Thauri, and others. His Secretary, Muhammad ibn Saad, and a number of other distinguished men, delivered traditional information on his authority. He held the post of *Kâdi* in the eastern quarter of Baghdad, and was appointed by the Caliph Al Mâmûn to fill the same office at Askar al Mahdi. The traditions received from him are considered of feeble authority, and doubts have been expressed on the subject of his veracity. Al Mâmûn testified a high respect for him, and treated him with marked honour."†

His "Maghâzi" the only one of his works extant in its original form.

Notwithstanding the extraordinary fertility of his pen, none of the works of Wâckidi have reached us in their original form, with the exception of the *Maghâzi*, or "History of the Wars of the Prophet," a copy of which was very recently discovered in Syria.‡

But the most important results of his

Happily, however, his Secretary, MUHAMMAD IBN SÁAD, profited by the labours of his master, and through him we enjoy largely

* The titles of several other works by Wâckidi are quoted by Dr. Sprenger. *Id.* p. 71, note 1.

† *Ibn Khallicân*, by *Slane*, vol. iii. p. 63.

‡ The enthusiastic and unwearied Sprenger, to whom we owe all the late discoveries of MSS. bearing on the biography of Mahomet, thus describes the volume:—"I have met with a work of the veritable Waqidy; I do not mean Ibn Sâd, the secretary of Waqidy, who died in 230, but Muhammad ibn Omar ibn Wâqid who was born in 130 and died in 207 A.H. Yes, my eyes have seen it, and my fingers have touched it, and what is more I secured it for the Bibliotheca Indica.

"The work is the Maghazi مغازی It has 392 pp. of 19 lines. The copy was written about A.H. 525, or sooner. It belongs to H. von Kremer, dragoman of the Austrian Consulate of Alexandria. He bought it at Damascus.

"The wars of Mohammad appear to be treated in it at three times as great a length as they are in any other known work. He gives always his authorities, and among them it would appear in some instances written ones, as for instance, Abu Mahsar" (Abu Máshar?). *Proceedings of the Asiatic Society*, No. 4, of 1854, p. 407.

The work is now being published in the Bibliotheca Indica of the Asiatic Society. I have not been able yet to take advantage of it, but as the present volume extends only to the Hegira, after which the Maghâzi of Wâckidi opens, the want of it has not been seriously felt.

the benefit of their results. The Secretary is thus described by Ibn Khallicân. "*Abu Abdallah Muhammad ibn Saad ibn Mani* was a man of the highest talents, merit, and eminence. He lived for some time with Al Wâckidi in the character of a secretary, and for this reason became known by the appellation *Kâtib al Wâckidi.* * * * He composed an excellent work in fifteen volumes on the different classes (*Tabacât*) of Mahomet's Companions and the *Tâbies* (*Successors*:) it contains also a history of the caliphs, brought down to his own time. He left also a smaller '*Tabacât.*' His character as a veracious and trustworthy historian is universally admitted. It is said that the complete collection of Al Wâckidi's works remained in the possession of four persons, the first of whom was his secretary, Muhammad ibn Saad. This distinguished writer displayed great acquirements in the sciences, the traditions, and traditional literature; most of his books treat of the Traditions and Law. The Khatîb Abu Bacr, author of the history of Baghdad, speaks of him in these terms:—'We consider Muhammad ibn Saad as a man of unimpeached integrity, and the traditions which he delivered are a proof of his veracity, for in the greater part of the information handed down by him, we find him discussing it passage by passage.' At the age of sixty-two he died at Baghdad, A.H. 230 (A.D. 844),* and was interred in the cemetery outside the Damascus gate (*Bâb al Shâm*)."†

labours preserved in the writings of his Secretary *Muhammad ibn Sâd*;

Known as *Kâtib al Wâckidi*.

In the fifteen volumes here noticed, the Secretary is supposed to have embodied the researches of his master, Al Wâckidi, together with the fruits of his own independent labour. The first volume has, fortunately for the interests of literature and of truth, been preserved to us in an undoubtedly genuine form. It contains the *Sîrat* or "Biography of Mahomet," with detailed accounts of the early learned men of Medîna, and of all the Companions of the Prophet who were present at Badr. For a copy of this invaluable volume we are indebted to the indefatigable research of Dr. Sprenger, who discovered it in the library of Mozuffer Husain Khan at Cawnpore. This manuscript is written in an

His works.

Discovery of a M.S. of the Kâtib al

* In Slane's work the date is given as A.H. 203 (A.D. 818), but this is shown by Dr. Sprenger to be a mistake (p. 71, note 2).

† *Slane*, vol. iii. pp. 66, 67.

Wâckidi's volume containing the biography of Mahomet and his Companions.

ancient but very distinct character, and is in excellent preservation.* It was executed at Damascus, A.H. 718 (A.D. 1318), by a scholar named Al Hakkari, who traces up, link by link, from the pupil to the master (by whom it was successively taught, or by whom copied), the guarantee of the authenticity of the volume, till the chain reaches to the Secretary, Muhammad ibn Saad himself.†

The title,

The title of the work, though pasted over, can by a little care be decyphered, and purports to be—*The first volume of the* (larger History of Mahomet and the several classes of his Companions), *composed by the Imâm and Hâfiz, Abu Muhammad ibn Sáad, the Secretary of Wâckidi.* ‡ I shall quote this work always as that of the *Kâtib âl Wâckidi*, or "Wâckidi's Secretary."

Composed mainly of detached traditions.

This treatise (if we except some special narratives, as portions of the military expeditions,) is composed entirely of detached traditions, which are arranged in chapters according to subject,

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* I learn from Dr. Sprenger that a M.S. of the Secretary's *Tabacât* (the only other believed to be extant,) is deposited in the Library of Gotha.

† He not only does this in some places through a double chain of authorities, but in the margin he transcribes the frequent notes of his immediate master, Abu Muhammad Dzumiâti, written in the margin of the original MS. from which he copied, and which recorded how far he had reached in his daily readings in the year A.H. 647 (A.D. 1249.) Each of these notes again contains the string of authorities up to the Secretary. The frequent memoranda of laborious collation with the original, give much confidence as to the care with which this copy was transcribed, and it is in effect remarkably accurate. It contains 300 leaves, or 600 pages. It is numbered by the leaves; and in quoting it, I have kept to the same plan, thus the 4th page is quoted as p. 2½, the 5th as p. 3, &c.

‡ Only two words are illegible in this title, which runs in the original as follows:— الجزء الاول من كتاب (طبقات كبير) تاليف امام الحافظ ابى محمد بن سعد الكاتب الواقدى *

Sprenger was at first of opinion, as stated in his "Life of Muhammad," p. 71, that this work of the Secretary was the one quoted by old writers as that of Wâckidi himself. But since the discovery of the original Maghâzi of Wâckidi he has rightly altered his opinion. In the Asiàtic Society's proceedings for 1854, No. 4, p. 407, he thus writes:—"I plead guilty to an error, and abjure a heresy into which I have fallen in my Life of Mohammed, p. 71, note 3. If Ibn Coteiba and other old authors quote Waqidy, they mean the veritable Muhamad ibn Omar, and not his Secretary, as there stated."

and in fair chronological order. The chain of authority is generally traced in detail to the fountain-head for each tradition, separately; and so carefully is every fragment of a tradition bearing on each subject treasured up and gathered together, that we often find a dozen or more traditions reiterated in detail one after another, though they are all couched perhaps in precisely the same words, or in expressions closely resembling one another. We likewise meet continually with the most contradictory authorities placed side by side without any remark; and sometimes (but the occasion is comparatively rare) the author gives his opinion as to their relative credibility.

Authority of Wâckidi and his Secretary.

Wâckidi is said to have been a follower of the Alyite sect.* Like others, he probably yielded to the prevailing influences of the day, which tended to exalt the Prophet's son-in-law and all the progenitors of the Abbasside race. But there is not the slightest ground for doubting that his character is equal, if not superior, to that of any other historian of his time.† Of the biography compiled by his Secretary, at all events, Dr. Sprenger has well vindicated the authority and faithfulness. "There is no trace," says he, "of a sacrifice of truth to design, or of pious fraud, in his work. It contains few miracles; and even those

* Some of the traditions given by the Secretary of Wâckidi are evidently such as no extreme Alyite would have admitted into his book. Take for example the conversation between Ali and Abbâs, in which the former, when urged by the latter to repair to the dying Prophet and enquire who was to be caliph, declined, "fearing lest Mahomet should name another, and then his chance of the caliphate would be gone for ever." *Kâtib al Wâckidi*, p. 150½. Such an idea would not have been tolerated by an extreme Shie-ite.

† The aspersions contained in the Kanz al Jawâhir, and the suspicions of his veracity quoted above from Ibn Khallicân, are completely refuted by Dr. Sprenger (p. 71, note, 4). The carefully collected traditions of Al Wâckidi and his Secretary must not be confounded with "*the Conquests in Syria*," the work of an unknown author of later date, but which bears the name of Wâckidi, and is described with more praise than it deserves by Gibbon in a note (x.) to the fifty-first chapter of his history, and forms the basis of Ockley's treatise.

Lieut. Lees has ably discussed the authorship of this work, but without arriving at any conclusion very satisfactory to himself. He fixes the probable date of compilation towards the middle of the third century of the Hegira. *Bibliotheca Indica*, No. 59; "*The Conquest of Syria, commonly ascribed to Al Wâckidi*," edited with notes by Wm. N. Lees, 42nd Regt. B.N.I.

which are recorded in it admit of an easy explanation." Concurring to a certain extent in this praise, I do not hesitate to designate the compilation as the fruit of an honest endeavour to bring together the most credible authorities current at the end of the second century, and to depict the life of Mahomet with as much truth as from such sources was possible. It is marked by at least as great sincerity as we may expect to find in any extant Mahometan author. But Dr. Sprenger's admiration of the work carries him beyond the reality, when he affirms that the miracles it contains are either few in number or of easy explanation. They are on the contrary nearly, if not quite, as numerous as those we find in Ibn Hishâm. It is very evident that the criticism of Wâckidi and his Secretary extended little, if at all, beyond that of their contemporaries. They were mere compilers of current traditions; and where these were attested by reputable names, they were received, however fabulous or extravagant, with a blind and implicit credulity.

TABARI. IV. TABARI, or *Abû Jafar ibn Jarîr al Tabari*, flourished in the latter part of the third century of the Moslem era. The following account of him is extracted from Ibn Khallicân:—"Al Tabari was an Imam (*master of the highest authority*) in many various branches of knowledge, such as Coranic interpretation, traditions, jurisprudence, history, &c. He composed some fine works on various subjects, and these productions are a testimony of his extensive information and great abilities. He was one of the *Mujtahid Imams*, as he (judged for himself and) adopted the opinions of no particular doctor. * * * He is held to merit the highest confidence as a transmitter of traditional information, and his history is the most authentic and the most exact of any. * * * He was born A.H. 224 (A.D. 838-9) at Amul in Tabarestân, and he died at Baghdad A.H. 310 (A.D. 923). He was buried the next day in (the court of) his own house. I saw in the Lesser Karâfa cemetery, at the foot of Mount Mokattam, near Old Cairo, a tomb which is often visited, and at the head of which is a stone bearing this inscription—*This is the tomb of Ibn Jarîral Tabari.* The public imagine it to belong to the author of the history; but this opinion is erroneous, the fact being that he was buried at Baghdad."*

* *Slane*, vol. ii. pp. 597–8.

Tabari, who is happily styled by Gibbon "the Livy of the Arabians,"* composed annals, not only of Mahomet's life, but of the progress of Islam. The Arabic original of the latter has long been known, and a part was published with a Latin translation by Kosegarten so long ago as 1831. This volume, which contains the earliest portion then discovered, commenced only with the Prophet's death. Of the previous chapters, hitherto known alone through an untrustworthy Persian translation, no trace could, until a very few years ago, anywhere be found.†

The volume containing his biography of Mahomet discovered lately by Dr. Sprenger.

Here again the literary world is indebted to Dr. Sprenger, who, having been deputed by the enlightened policy of the Indian Government to examine the Native libraries of Lucknow, succeeded in tracing from amongst heaps of neglected manuscripts, a portion of the long lost volume. It begins with the birth of Mahomet; but it terminates with the siege of Medîna, that is, five years before the Prophet's death.‡ The remainder of the work is in all probability extant in India, and may yet reward the search of some future collector of manuscripts. The fortunate discovery is described below in the words of Sprenger himself.

"One of the most important books, which it was my good luck to find during my late mission to Lucknow, is the fourth volume of the history of Tabari (who died in A.H. 310), of which I believe no other copy is known to exist.

"It is a volume in a small quarto of 451 pages, fifteen lines in a page. Ten pages are wanting. The writing is ancient and bold, and though not without errors, generally very correct. I should say, from the appearance, the copy is five hundred years old.

"The intrinsic merits of the work are not so great as might be expected. Two-thirds of the book consists of extracts from Ibn

* *Gibbon's Decline and Fall*, chap. li, note 1.

† Even at so late a period as the publication of his *Life of Mohammed*, (i.e. 1851) Dr. Sprenger writes of this author:—

"At present, however, the portion of his annals, which contains the history of the origin of the Islam, is available only in the Persian translation, which cannot be fully relied upon" (p. 72).

‡ It closes with the chapter on the siege; but the volume terminating naturally, is unbroken and complete, with exception of the ten pages noticed by Dr. Sprenger, of which the hiatus occurs in the early part of the volume.

The portion intervening between the siege and the death of Mahomet evidently constitutes a second volume of the same manuscript.

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Ishâc and Wâckidi, and only one-third or thereabouts contains original traditions. Some of these are very valuable, inasmuch as they contain information not to be found anywhere else."*

Importance of the discovery.

The discovery of this portion of Tabari in its original language is, after that of Wâckidi and his Secretary, the most important event affecting the biography of Mahomet which has occurred for many years. It has a marked bearing on the sufficiency and completeness of our other early authorities, Ibn Ishâc (as known to us through Ibn Hishâm) and Wâckidi.

The estimate given by Dr. Sprenger (not an exaggerated one), that two-thirds of the work of Tabari are composed of literal extracts quoted formally from Ibn Ishâc and Wâckidi, proves not only that these two biographers were in his day held as trust-

Especially as proving the completeness of our authorities, Ibn Ishâc and Wâckidi.

worthy, but likewise that they were *the standard writers* and the *chief authorities* on the subject, up to at least the close of the third century. The remaining materials of Tabari, derived from a variety of sources, possess, as observed by Sprenger, a peculiar interest, because they are accessible in no other quarter. Yet these sources in no case assume the character of a complete and authoritative biography, but only that of occasional or miscellaneous fragments, nor do any of them bring to light new and important features in Mahomet's life. Quoted in Tabari, they are sometimes valuable as supplementary to the accounts we already possess from Ibn Ishâc and Wâckidi, or confirmatory of them;† but they are oftener symptomatic of the growth of a less honest and scrupulous selection than that of the earlier collectors.‡

* Notice of the 4th vol. of Tabari, *Asiatic Journal*, No. ccxii, p. 108.

† One of these miscellaneous sources is remarkable. Abd al Mâlik, who was caliph from A.H. 66 to A.H. 96, was addicted to traditional studies, and being curious to ascertain several points of Mahomet's biography, consulted Orwah ibn al Zobeir (note p. xxxiv.) for information. We have extracts from letters written by Orwah in reply to the Caliph's questions, and in particular one long and detailed account of the battle of Badr (pp. 247-251). Orwah's letters are also quoted, but briefly by Ibn Hishâm, *e.g.* p. 330. He was born A.H. 23, and was therefore acquainted with several of the Companions of Mahomet, on whose authority he relates traditions. He was also, as before stated, the master of Zohri.

‡ This especially displays itself in the insertion of many unfounded stories of an evidently ultra-Alyite origin. Thus in the account of Ohod, Othmân (afterwards Caliph, and of the Ommeyad family) is made to run away with a

Now as Tabari was an intelligent and diligent historian, and evidently neglected no useful and reliable sources within his reach, it follows as a reasonable conclusion that, beside Ibn Ishâc and Wâckidi, there were available in Tabari's time no other material works or sources of essential importance, relating to the biography of Mahomet. Had any existed, they must have been within his reach; and, if within his reach, he would unquestionably have made ample use of them in his annals.

Historical sources recounted.

To the three biographies by IBN HISHÂM, by WÂCKIDI and his Secretary, and by TABARI, the judicious historian of Mahomet will, as his original authorities, confine himself. He will also receive, with a similar respect, such traditions in the general Collections of the earliest traditionists,—Bokhâri, Muslim, Tirmidzi, &c., as may bear upon his subject. But he will reject as *evidence* all later authors, to whose so-called traditions he will not allow any historical weight whatever.

No subsequent works carry any historical weight.

It is evident that, in the absence of any History or Collection of Traditions, compiled *before* the accession of the Abbassides, the works above specified present us with all the credible information regarding the Arabian Prophet which mankind are ever likely to obtain. It is clear that our authorities sought out, with a commendable zeal and an untiring assiduity, all traditions which could illustrate their subject. They were contemporary with those tradition-gatherers who, as we have seen, compassed land and sea in the enthusiastic pursuit after any trace of Mahomet yet lingering in the memories, or in the family archives, of his followers. Whatever authentic information really existed must already have become public and available. It cannot be imagined that, in the unwearied search of the second century, any reliable

company of others from the field of battle, and not stop till he had ascended a hill close to Medîna. There he is said to have remained concealed for three days, and then to have returned to Mahomet, who accosted him thus —"Ah, Othmân, you went away and remained a long time there!" (p. 380). This is evidently an anti-Ommeyad fiction, with the object of lowering the character of Othmân, to which there is no allusion in the Kâtib al Wâckidi or Ibn Hishâm. All the combatants of Ohod went forth *the next day* towards Hamra al Asad in a bravado pursuit after their conquerors, who had retired immediately after the battle. It is not possible that Othmân could have been then in his pretended hiding place.

tradition could have escaped the Collectors; or, supposing this possible, that it could have survived that age in an unrecorded shape. Every day diminished the chance of any stray traditions still floating downward on the swift and troubled current of time. Later historians could not by any possibility add a single source of real information to what these authors have given us. What they did add, and that abundantly, consisted solely of worthless and fictitious matter, gathered from the spurious traditions and fabricated stories of later times. After the era of our three biographers, the springs of fresh authority absolutely fail.*

Opinion of Sprenger.

The verdict of Sprenger is therefore just, and of the deepest importance:—"To consider late historians like Abulfeda as *authorities*, and to suppose that an account gains in certainty, because it is mentioned by several of them, is highly uncritical; and if such a mistake is committed by an orientalist, we must accuse him of culpable ignorance in the history of Arabic literature."*

Early writers alone authoritative.

Our early authors were, besides, in an incomparably better position than men in later days, for judging of the character and authenticity of each tradition. However blind their reception of the supposed authorities that lay far back close to the fountain-head, they must have possessed the ability, as we are bound to concede that they had the intention and desire, to test the credit and honesty of the tradition-mongers *of their own age*, and of that immediately preceding. An intimate acquaintance with the character and circumstances of those persons would often afford them grounds for distinguishing recently fabricated or mistaken narratives from ancient and *bonâ fide* tradition; and for rejecting many infirm and worthless traditions which later historians, with the

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* *Life of Muhammad*, p. 73. This remark, of course, will not apply to those portions of later works which contain statements *quoted verbatim* from early authors. Thus the Isâbah, or *Biographical Dictionary of the Companions*, by Ibn Hijr, who died as late as 852 H., gives many extracts of this nature from such early biographical writers as Ibn Ocba, Abu Máshar, Ibn Kalbi, &c.; and these may be of the highest use.

It is much to be regretted that the printing of this work, nearly one fourth of which is finished, by the Asiatic Society, has been suspended by orders from the Court of Directors.

indiscriminate appetite so pitifully generated by Moslem credulity, have greedily devoured.*

I have thus, as proposed, endeavoured to sketch the original sources for the biography of Mahomet. I have examined the Coran, and have admitted its authority as an authentic and contemporary record. I have inquired into the origin and history of Mahometan Tradition generally; acknowledged that it contains the elements of truth; and endeavoured to indicate some canons, by which that truth may be eliminated from the legend and fiction so closely commingled with it. I have enumerated the biographical compilations which can alone be regarded as worthy of attention, and have shown that no later authors are possessed of any original and independent authority. The principles thus laid down, if followed with sagacity, perseverance, and impartiality, will enable the inquirer to arrive at a fair approximation to historical fact. Many Gordian knots regarding the Prophet of Arabia will remain unsolved, many paradoxes will still vainly excite curiosity and baffle explanation; but the groundwork of his life will be laid down with certainty, and the chief features of his character will be fully and accuracy developed.† Review of the Chapter.

* In illustration, it is sufficient to refer to the "Legends" contained in the *Life of Mohammed* by Dr. Sprenger, and to the extravagant and absurd stories in modern authors, some specimens of which will be found in an article in the *Calcutta Review* on "Biographies of Muhammad for India." No. xxxiv. Art. 6.

† When this chapter was in type, and after the greater part of it had finally left the author's hands, he received from Dr. Sprenger an interesting note, "*on the origin and progress of writing down historical facts among the Musalmans*," for the As. Socty's Journal. This note is chiefly composed of extracts from a work of the Khatîb Baghdâdi (d. 465 A.H.) called *Tackeyud ul Ilm*. The numerous authorities quoted regarding the practice of writing traditions in the earliest days of Islam are of the same character as those noticed above (p. xxxv.); and I see no reason to alter my opinion of their untrustworthiness. The note, however, throws considerable light on the origin of the custom in later years.

CHAPTER SECOND.

The Aborigines and early Commerce of Arabia, as referred to in the Holy Scriptures, and by Classical Writers.

Object of the two following chapters.

THE rise of Islam was influenced by many circumstances connected with the history of the Arabian peninsula, not only for several preceding centuries, but even in the far distant epochs of patriarchal story. Was Abraham the father of the Arabians as well as of the Israelites? Was not the religion of Abraham their own ancestral faith? It was surely then a right and fitting task that the Prophet now arisen, of Ishmaelite descent, should restore the worship of the Kaaba which had long before been established by his great ancestor.

History of Arabia before Islam. *First*,—from Scriptural and Classical sources. *Second*,—From indigenous Tradition.

It is important for us to know what materials were found by Mahomet already existing in the popular belief of Arabia, whereon to found such an assumption. This consideration will lead us to inquire by whom Arabia was first peopled, and what influences we can trace anterior to Islam affecting the religious condition and opinions of the nation. The history of the earlier and patriarchal ages, as gleaned from Scripture and from classical sources, will form the subject of the present chapter.* In the next we shall,

* In this enquiry, I have felt the disadvantage, always incident to the Indian student, of having but a very limited range of works to consult.

The following I have found chiefly useful :—

1. *The Biblical Geography of Asia Minor, Phenicia, and Arabia, by E. F. C. Rosenmüller, D.D., translated into English by the Rev. N. Morren, A.M.* (*Biblical Cabinet*, vol. iii.) Edinburgh, 1841.
2. *Essai sur L'Histoire Des Arabes avant L'Islamisne, &c. Par A. P. Caussin de Perceval.* (In three vols.) Vol. i. Paris, 1847.
3. *The Historical Geography of Arabia*, by the Rev. Charles Forster, B.D., two vols. London, 1844.
4. *Cyclopœdia of Biblical Literature:* edited by John Kitto, D.D. Edinburgh, 1845. Articles,—Arabia, Ethiopia, Cush, Nebaioth, Idumea, &c.

by the dawning light of indigenous tradition, follow the same track till we reach the threshold of Islam.

The tradition of Arabia comparatively modern.

The first peopling of Arabia is a subject on which we may in vain look for any light from the tradition of Arabia itself. Tradition, indeed, gives us the genealogies of Himyar kings and the links of the great Coreishite line of descent. But the latter do not ascend much beyond the Christian era, and the former only five or six centuries farther. The earlier names of the Himyar dynasty were probably derived from bare inscriptions; and of the Coreish we have hardly anything but a naked ancestral tree, till within two or three centuries of Mahomet.

All that is ancient in Arabian tradition derived from the Jews.

Beyond these periods, Mahometan tradition is entirely worthless. It is not original, but taken at second hand from the Jews. Mahomet having claimed to be of the seed of Ishmael, the Jewish Rabbins who were gained over to his cause endeavoured to confirm the claim from the genealogies of the Old Testament and of rabbinical tradition. In the attempt to reconcile these with the received notions of the Arabs, Joktan (whom they found in Scripture to be an early immigrant into Arabia) became identified with Cahtân, the great ancestor of the southern tribes; while Mahomet's paternal line (which he himself declared could not be followed beyond Adnân, that is, about a century before the Christian era) was nevertheless traced up by fabricated steps, eighteen centuries farther, to Ishmael.* Both the legends and the ethnological

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* In the following chapter it will be shown that Mahomet's pedigree cannot be traced higher than Adnân, and that the Prophet styled those *liars* who attempted to trace it farther back. Nevertheless the attempt is frequently made. After one of these pretended genealogical trees ascending to Ishmael himself, the traditionist adds, "And that is an ancient tradition, *taken from one of the former books*" (that is the Jewish books.) ذلك انه علم قديم اخذ من الكتاب الاول * —*Tabari*, p. 52.

The following tradition also illustrates the practice. "Hisham ibn Muhammad related as follows:—'There was a man of Tadmor, called Abû Yacûb ibn Maslama, of the children of Israel; and he used to read in the Jewish books, and was versed in their traditional learning. Now this man mentioned that Bûrach (Baruch) ibn Bâria, the scribe of Eremia (Jeremiah), proved the genealogy of Máad son of Adnân, and placed it on its proper

assumptions of Mahometans regarding events prior to the Christian era, being thus derived directly from the Jews, possess no value of their own, and as evidence must be entirely rejected. They consist either of simple plagiarism, or they refer to Arabian personages and events of a very modern date, confounded in a rude and even ludicrous manner with the patriarchal characters and stories of the Old Testament.*

The books of Moses our only guide.

We must, therefore, fall back implicitly upon the Mosaic record as our only guide to the original settlements in Arabia; and we shall find in the general statements and incidental allusions of the inspired book a clue to the events out of which Modern Arabia has developed herself.

The Cushites.

It has been argued with considerable probability, that a portion of the descendants of Cush, the son of Ham, found their way

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basis, and wrote it out; and this genealogy is well known amongst the doctors of the People of the book (the Jews), as being certified in their books. Now it closely approaches to the foregoing list of names; and whatever differences there are between them arise from the difference of language, their names being translated from the Hebrew." *Kâtib al Wâckidi*, p. 9; *Tabari*, p. 53.

A farther extract will be given in the following chapter from the Secretary of Wâckidi, to the same effect.

Ancient genealogies with strange names are not unfrequently referred to individuals known in the Old Testament under different names. *Vide e.g. Tabari*, p. 51.

Some of the Medina converts descended from Cahtân yet anxious to show that they too were of Ishmaelite stock, invented a genealogical tree, by which Cahtân is made to descend *from Ishmael! Kâtib al Wâckidi*, p. 262½; *Caussin de Perc.* i. 39.

* The simple plagiarisms are such as the accounts of the Fall, the Flood, and the various passages in the history of the Israelites. The travestied scenes are such as the actual events of Abraham's and Ishmael's lives, misapplied to Mecca and its vicinity, and connected with the remote links of the Coreishite genealogical table:—thus Abraham's intended sacrifice of *Isaac* on Mount *Moriah* is metamorphosed into the intended sacrifice of *Ishmael* on a height in the valley of *Minâ;* so Ishmael is married to the daughter of a Jorhomite prince, who lived shortly before the Christian era. M. Caussin de Perceval (*Essai*, i. 173 & 184) calls this a myth; and it is no doubt mythical, in so far as it embodies the Moslem tenet that Mahomet was descended from a cross between the seed of Ishmael and pure Arab blood. But it is not the less a grossly travestied version of the scriptural account of the patriarch. See above, p. lxix; Canon ii. I.

into Arabia, and formed the first body of post-diluvian settlers there.* The names of Cush and Cushan are evidently associated by the sacred writers both with Arabia and with Africa; and the titles of his sons have been traced, though with some uncertainty, in the names of existing tribes.† But there is no proof or probability that the Cushites remained in Arabia a distinct and separate race; it is likely that they soon mingled with the subsequent immigrants, and lost their national individuality.‡

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* That the majority of the scriptural notices of Cush refer to the country towards Abyssinia is clearly shown by the learned translator of Rosenmüller's Geography. *Kitto's Cyclopædia*,—Articles, CUSH, ETHIOPIA, and ARABIA. Yet there are passages which apparently refer to Arabia. Thus the inspired historian in 1 Chron. iv. 40, after specifying Gedor, a country seemingly in the vicinity of Arabia Petræa, adds, "for they of Ham had dwelt there of old." So in 2 *Chron.* xx. 16, he notices the Arabians that were near the Cushites as attacking Judah, which conveys the impression that the Cushites were a people inhabiting Arabia. The deduction from Moses marrying a Cushitess is either that the Midianites were called Cushites, or (which is less likely) that Moses married a second time. The parallelism in Hab. iii. 7, though not conclusive, is in favour of the former supposition. In 2 Chron. xiv. 9, Zerah the Cushite having attacked Judea, Asa is described as overthrowing him and spoiling the cities to the North of Arabia; but Zerah may possibly have been an *Abyssinian* adventurer, for he appears to have had a body of Africans with him, and *chariots*, which were never used in Arabia. *Vide Heeren's Res. Africa*, i. 417.

For the whole subject see *Rosenmüller's Biblical Geography*, Eng. trans. iii. 280-285; the articles above quoted from *Kitto's Cyclopædia*; and *Forster's Geography of Arabia*, vol. i. part 1 section 1.

† From the identity of the names of three of the progeny of Cush, viz. *Havilah*, *Sheba*, and *Dedan*, with those of the Shemitic branch, and the similarity of a fourth, viz. *Seba*, one cannot satisfactorily assign to the Cushites exclusively any of the Arab tribes whose names are derived therefrom. None of the remaining names, viz. Sabtah, Raamah, and Sabtecha, are successfully traced by Mr. Forster, notwithstanding his indefatigable ingenuity and conjecture. *Raamah* is classed with the tribes of Arabia by Ezekiel, Ch. xxvii. 22.

‡ There are no traces, in original Arabic tradition, of a separate Cushite race, aboriginal in Arabia. Some tribes may have been darker than others, and possibly so in consequence of primitive descent, though the circumstance is never thus explained. On the other hand, the negro inhabitants appear always to be referred to in the earliest accounts as Abyssinians who had *immigrated from Africa*. There never was any national sympathy or congeniality between the two races.

The descendants of Joktan.

The next colonists of Arabia are thought to have been the progeny of Joktan, son of Eber, the fifth in descent from Shem. The sacred records inform us that they settled eastward, that is, in the language of Moses, in the north of the peninsula, or the country stretching from the head of the Red Sea towards the Persian Gulph.* The names of some of Joktan's sons are identified with those of certain Arabian districts;† and it is not unna-

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M. C. de Perceval (i. 42-46) has proposed a theory, that in South Arabia there were two distinct races, Cushite and Joktanide, the former *Sabeans* (Seba), the latter *Shabeans* (Sheba). The first he identifies with the Adites; and the extinction of the Adites in Arabia (as held by Mahometan tradition) he attributes to the emigration of the entire Cushite race, and their transplantation from Arabia into Abyssinia. The theory is ingenious, but devoid of proof, and in itself improbable. As for the Adites, it has been shown by Sprenger that they lived near the Thamudites, *north* of Mecca: they were therefore entirely distinct from the Sabeans of Yemen. *Sprenger's Life of Mohammad*, p. 13.

His farther theory (i. 5), that the Phenicians are a colony of Cushites from Yemen, rests also on a very slender basis. *Herodotus I.* i. (Φοίνικας) ἀπὸ τῆς Ἐρυθρῆς καλεομένης θαλάσσης ἀπικομένους κ. τ. λ., does not identify either Yemen or the Cushites. So Trogus Pomp., quoted by Justin. xviii. 3, is still more vague. It appears to me most probable that this tradition arose from the children of Israel having come from the Red Sea to occupy Palestine. The fame which attached to the Israelites as arriving from the Red Sea, would, with a little misapprehension, come in the course of time to apply to other inhabitants of the neighbourhood, and thus to the Tyrians also.

* After enumerating the children of Joktan, it is added "and their dwelling was from Mesha, as thou goest, unto Sephar, a mount of the East." *Genesis.* x. 30. No successful attempt has been made towards the identification of the names there specified with any existing ones; but the *direction* of the country indicated is clear enough.

† Forster presses his similarities and inversions of names beyond the bounds of legitimate argument, and sometimes into the region of mere fancy. Yet we may admit that Hazarmaveth is perpetuated in *Hadhramaut;* and perhaps Havilah and Sheba in the *Khaulân* and *Saba* of the present day. Even C. de Perceval identifies Uzal with *Awzâl*, the ancient name of a canton of Sana. Vol. i. 40. It may also be conceded that the *Ophir* of the Bible belongs to the south-western coast of Arabia, and was so denominated from one of the sons of Joktan. Of these names, however, Havilah belongs also to the Cushite line; and Sheba both to the Abrahamic and Cushite families, and in the slightly different form of Seba to another Cushite branch. The

tural to conclude that this race, wherever tempted by pasture or the oases of the desert, extended rapidly southward, until it reached the fertile lands of Yemen and Hadhramaut. There, intermingled with the line of Cush, it formed, from the Straits of Bâb al mandab to the Persian Gulph, the permanent settlement of the Himyar and other aboriginal tribes.

Descending the stream of time, we find that several centuries later a new race spread over the north of Arabia. While Joktan proceeded southward, his brother Peleg—so called "because in his days the earth was divided"*—remained in Mesopotamia. But in process of time, Abraham, the sixth in descent from Peleg, "gat him out from his country, and from his kindred," and "went forth to go into the land of Canaan," and there sojourned as a nomad chief. It is from the stock of this patriarch that the northern settlements of the peninsula were replenished. The Abrahamic races may be thus enumerated: 1, *Ishmaelites;* 2, *Keturahites;* 3, *Edomites,* or descendants of Esau; 4, *Moabites* and *Ammonites;* 5, *Nahorites.* Abrahamic tribes.

1. The ISHMAELITES, or Hagarenes. Hagar, when cast forth by Abraham, dwelt with her son in the wilderness of Paran, to the north of Arabia.† The divine promise of temporal prosperity in favour of the seed of Ishmael was faithfully fulfilled.‡ His twelve sons became "twelve princes according to their nations."§ These fruitful tribes first extended along the frontier of Arabia, from the northern extremity of the Red Sea towards the mouth of the Euphrates.‖ They appear to have occupied each a separate dis- 1.—*Ishmaelites.*

latter name appears to be distinguished from the former in Ps. lxxii. 10. The "kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts," or as in the prayer-book version, "The kings of Arabia and Saba;"—so also verse 15. Mareb, called also *Saba* anciently, may have some connection with the Joktanide Sheba and the famous queen of Solomon's time, but the name cannot with certainty be attributed to either line exclusively. *Forster's Arabia,* i. 154, *et seq. Rosenmüller's Geography,* iii. 298.

* *Gen.* x. 25; 1 *Chron.* i. 19.

† *Gen.* xxi. 25; xxv. 18.

‡ *Gen.* xvii. 20.

§ *Gen.* xxv. 16.

‖ "They dwelt from Havilah unto Shur, that is before Egypt, as thou goest towards Assyria." *Gen.* xxv. 18. This means probably from the margin of the Persian Gulph to the south-east angle of the Mediterranean Sea.

trict, and followed a nomad life, in moveable encampments, and with occasional fortified places of refuge for their cattle.* They also practised merchandize, and became wealthy and powerful.

Nabatheans. Of the sons of Ishmael, *Nebaioth* the first born was the father of the Nabathean nation, who succeeded the Idumeans in Arabia Petrea, and whom we find at the commencement of our era holding a wide political influence in Northern Arabia. The second, *Kedar*, was so famous in his Arab descendants, that the epithet Kedarenes. "Kedarenes" came to be applied by the Jews to the Bedouins in general.† Less noted are the names of *Duma*, *Thema*, *Jetur*, and *Naphish*.‡ The progeny of the remaining sons either mingled with other tribes or, penetrating the peninsula, have escaped historical record.

2.—*Keturahites.* 2. KETURAH bore to Abraham six sons; and these he sent away to the eastward while he yet lived.§ Their descendants estab-

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* *Gen.* xxv. 16. "These are the sons of Ishmael, and these are their names, by their towns, and by their castles: twelve princes according to their nations." *See Rosenmüller*, iii. 143, *and the translator's note.* The "towns" probably meant moveable villages of tents, and the "castles" fortified folds for protection in time of war.

† *Vide Rosenmüller*, iii. 145; *Kitto's Cyclopœdia*, Art. KEDAR. It has been conjectured that this tribe dwelt next to the Israelites, who, being best acquainted with them, applied their name to the Arab nation generally. In the time of Isaiah, C. de Perceval holds the posterity of Ishmael to have been divided into two branches, those of Kedar and Nebaioth (the Arabic Nâbit). "All the flocks of Kedar shall be gathered unto thee, the rams of Nebaioth shall minister unto thee." *Is.* lx. 7.

‡ Duma is perhaps preserved in *Dûmat al Jandal*, a town about half-way between the mouths of the Nile and the Persian Gulph. Thema corresponds with more than one place in Arabia called *Tayma*. Both Duma and Thema are noticed as Arabian in *Is.* xxi. 11 and 14. For other scriptural notices of Thema see *Rosenmüller*, iii. 147. *Jetur* and *Naphish* are mentioned in 1 *Chron.* v. 19, 20, as in alliance with the Hagarenes, who were vanquished in the time of Saul. From Jetur may come *Iturea*, and perhaps the present *Jedur*. *Rosenmüller, ibid.*

§ C. de Perceval would identify the progeny of Ketura with the Bani Catura, who settled at Mecca along with the Jorhomites; but there is no farther ground for the conjecture than the mere similarity of name. The descendants of Ketura resided in the north of the peninsula, while the Bani Catura came to Mecca from the south.

lished themselves as nomad tribes throughout the great desert in the north of Arabia. The *Midianites*, sprung from the fourth son, soon became a numerous people. With the Moabites, they endeavoured to obstruct the progress of the children of Israel towards the Holy Land; and, in the time of the Judges, they held them in subjection for seven years.* *Dedan* and *Sheba*, children of Jokshan, the second son of Ketura, are also connected with Arab associations.† Midianites.

3. The EDOMITES or IDUMEANS, descendants of Esau, early peopled the country of Arabia Petrea. Their capital was Mount Seir, whence they expelled the aboriginal Horites, and succeeded to their possessions.‡ Two grandsons of Esau,—Teman§ and Amalek,‖— 3.—*Idumeans.*

It is also very unlikely that, so many tribes having descended from Ketura's sons, any *one* of them should continue for seventeen or eighteen centuries to be called exclusively by her name. Here we have an instance of the danger of being guided by the likeness of name alone, even when the philosophy and caution of M. C. de Perceval are at hand: how much greater the danger when those qualities are absent.

* *Numb.* xxxi. 2, &c.; *Judges*, vi. 1. They would appear then to have spoken the same language as the Israelites, for Gideon understood the Midianite reciting his dream. *Judges* vii. 15. Compare *Is.* lx. 16, where a tribe of the name of Midian is mentioned as famous for its breed of camels.

† *Shuach*, the sixth son, may also be connected with the Arab tribe noticed in *Job* ii. 11; and, if so, his family must have continued to inhabit the North of the Peninsula. *Sheba* may likewise be related to the tribe noted in *Job*, i. 15, as in the vicinity of Uz. *Forster*, i. 327. The nation of *Dedan* settled near Idumea, and is repeatedly spoken of by the Prophets, in that connection.

‡ The blessing of "the fatness of the earth, and the dew from heaven," was given by Isaac to Esau. *Gen.* xxvii. 39. As to their country, see Deut. ii. 12. The *cause* of their first leaving Canaan and settling at Mount Seir should be noted as illustrative of the influences which would urge the Abrahamic races onwards in the direction of Central Arabia. Esau "went into the country from the face of his brother Jacob, for their riches were more than that they might dwell together, and the land wherein they were strangers could not bear them because of their cattle; thus dwelt Esau in Mount Seir. Esau is Edom." *Gen.* xxxvi. 6-8.

§ *Job* ii. 11; *Jerem.* xlix. 7.

‖ There is no doubt that *a* nation of Amalekites descended from Amalek, the grandson of Esau. After enumerating Amalek among the six grandsons of Esau by "Aliphaz," Josephus proceeds: "These dwelt in that part of Idumea called Gebalitis, and in that denominated from Amalek, *Amale-*

Amalekites. were progenitors of separate Arab tribes. The Amalekites had at least a partial seat at Petra and the country about the head of the Red Sea till near the year 700 B.C., when they were driven thence probably in a southern direction. Mahometan legend speaks of Amalekite tribes as the earliest inhabitants both of Medîna and Mecca, and of the country lying to the south of Syria.

4.—*Nahorites.* 4. The NAHORITES. Uz and Buz, the sons of Nahor, Abraham's brother, were the ancestors of extensive tribes to the north of Arabia; and the Bible repeatedly refers to them in connexion with this locality.*

5.—*Moabites and Ammonites.* 5. The MOABITES and AMMONITES, descended from the two sons

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kitis," &c. *Antiq.* ii. 1. In describing the attack of the Amalekites on Moses, he specifies their country as "Gobolitis and Petra" (iii. 2); and in the time of Saul, he speaks of them as occupying the tract "from Pelusium to the Red Sea" vi. 7, 3.; and 1 *Sam.* xv. 7. The objection grounded on the sudden increase of the tribe is well answered by Ryland, for Israel had increased with equal rapidity; and besides, a warlike and successful people would attract adherents from other tribes (as we find in the after history of Arabia), and all would fight under one banner and be called by one name.

The notice of the "country of the Amalekites" as smitten by Chedorlaomer (*Gen.* xiv. 7) refers to a period long anterior to the birth of Amalek; but it is remarkable that while other conquered nations (the *Rephaims*, &c.) are spoken of simply as tribes, the "*country* of the Amalekites" is specified. What is meant therefore probably is,—"the people inhabiting the *country afterwards peopled by the Amalekites;*" otherwise we must of course believe that there was another nation of Amalekites, not of Abrahamic descent.

Morren holds that the Amalekites are not descendants of Esau, and that they were never associated with Esau's posterity either by Jewish or Arab tradition. *See* note at p. 219, vol. iii. of *Rosenmüller's Geography;* and Art. IDUMEA in *Kitto's Cyclopœdia.* But Arab tradition for the period in question is valueless; and both Josephus and the Old Testament favour the opposite view. *See in the same Cyclopœdia*, Art. AMALEK, by *Ryland*, which is more satisfactory.

Michaelis regards the Amalekites as identical with the Canaanites. C. de Perceval on the contrary, holds them to be the descendants of Esau through Amalek. I concur with M. C. de Perceval, and with him believe that the Amalekites of Arabian tradition denote to the same people, but in a vague and general sense which embraces many other tribes of Abrahamic descent. *Essai*, i. 22.

* Uz is referred to in *Job* i. 1; *Lament.* iv. 21; and *Jerem.* xxv. 20. From the latter passage the country of Uz would seem to have been of some extent. Buz, mentioned among other Arab tribes in *Is.* xxv. 23, and *Job*, xxxii. 2, most likely refers to the same people. *Rosenm.* iii. 138.

of Lot, are prominent in scriptural history. They lived more to the north than any of the nations before specified. Their most southerly stations lay east of the Dead Sea, and comprised the fine pasture lands of Balcâa and Kerek.

Northern and Central tracts of Arabia widely peopled by the Abrahamic tribes.

From this brief survey it is evident that an extraordinary number of distinct and yet most populous tribes sprang from the patriarch Abraham, or from branches collateral with him, and that they must have occupied a position of commanding influence in the north of Arabia, throughout which the greater part of them spread abroad. The sacred writers, from their view being limited mainly to Palestine, noticed only such of these tribes as lived upon its border; but we are not to conclude that the progeny of Abraham were to be found in that quarter alone. The natural expansiveness of nations in those early days while the earth was yet imperfectly peopled, and the nomad habits of the race, would force them on towards the south and east. Certainly it is reasonable to suppose that large tracts of the northern plains and highlands and central steppes of Arabia were peopled by them, or by nations closely allied and blended with them.

as evidenced by national tradition,

The conclusion is strengthened by indisputable evidence of *tradition* and of language. The popular voice of some of the tribes of Arabia asserts an Abrahamic descent, and we find even as far south as Mecca the opinion current before the time of Mahomet. It is, indeed, improbable that a tradition of this nature should have been handed down from the remote age of the patriarch by an independent train of evidence in any particular tribe, or association of tribes; it is far more likely that it was borrowed from the Jews, and kept alive by occasional communication with them. Still, the bare fact of such a notion gaining even a partial and intermittent currency in any tribe, affords a strong presumption that the tribe was really of Abrahamic descent or connexion; and that the common associations, habits, language, or religious tenets, derived from that origin, naturally fell in with the tradition, and rendered easy and natural its adoption.

and language.

Still stronger is the evidence from the close affinity of the *Arabic language* to that spoken by the Israelitish branch of the Abrahamic stock. The identity of both tongues, extending as it

does to nine-tenths of the Hebrew roots, the similarity of declension, and the analogy of idiom and construction, point indubitably to one ethnological origin. Besides the Arabic, there was current in remote ages at least one other tongue in the south of Arabia. But even there the Himyaritic dialect was confined to the settled population of towns and their vicinity; while Arabic had from time immemorial been the language of song and of oratory among the wild Bedouins even of Yemen extraction. Eventually, with the help of Islam, the latter altogether displaced its rival, and gained a complete ascendancy throughout the entire peninsula.* So wide a diffusion in Arabia of the most polished branch of the Syro-Arabian language, affords evidence of a corresponding prevalence of Abrahamic blood.

History of the Arabs unknown for twenty centuries after Abraham.

But while it is undeniable that a great proportion of the tribes of northern and central Arabia were descended from Abraham, or from a collateral stock, we have no materials for tracing their history from the era of that patriarch for near two thousand years. Severed from the rest of the world by inhospitable deserts, and dissociated by an insuperable diversity of manners and customs, the Arabs of this tract passed through these long ages unnoticed and almost unknown. Our knowledge of the race is confined to the casual accounts of the few border tribes which came in contact with the Jewish and Roman governments, and to an occasional glimpse, as in the case of the Queen of Sheba and the Roman expedition, into the interior. We may not, however, doubt that, during the five-and-twenty centuries which elapsed between Abraham and Mahomet, the mutual relations of the Arab tribes were undergoing an uninterrupted succession of the revolutions and changes to which human

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* When Mahomet sent Ayâsh, son of Abu Rabia, to the Himyarites, he was to bid them "translate into Arabic the Coran, when they repeated it in another tongue." فاذا رطنوا فقل ترجموا *Kâtib al Wâckidi*, p. 55. This appears to imply the currency at that time of the Himyar language; but it did not long survive the inroads of Islam. The ancient fragments of ante-Islamitic poetry, even among the pure Cahtânite Bedouins (who were aboriginal of Yemen) were all in *Arabic*. We hear of no *Himyar* poetry whatever. *C. de Perceval's Essai*, i. 57.

society, especially when broken up into numerous independent fragments, is always exposed. Some of the tribes, like the Horims of old, were extirpated; others, as the Amalekites of Petra, driven from their original seats; some migrated to distant settlements, or merged into more extensive and commanding bodies; while intermarriage, conquest, and phylarchical revolution, united races of different origin, and severed those sprung from a common stock.* But of such changes, excepting in one or two of the border tribes, we have hardly any record.

Brief notices attainable only of the outskirt tribes.

It thus only remains for us, in the absence of any annals for Central Arabia, to bring into one view the brief notices which are to be gleaned from various quarters of the north-western outskirts of the peninsula.

Carriers of Southern and Eastern traffic.

Already in the time of Jacob, some of the Abrahamic races had undertaken commerce, for we find the Ishmaelites even then transporting to Egypt upon their camels the spicy products of the East.† The facilities of transport offered by "the ship of the desert," and the position of the peninsula itself, secured to its inhabitants from the earliest period the privilege of carrying towards Egypt and Syria the merchandize of the South and of the East. One of the chief lines of this traffic lay through Arabia Petrea.

The Idumeans.—Relations of the Jewish Government with Arabia.

The Idumeans and Amalekites, as we have already seen, supplanted the aboriginal inhabitants of Mount Seir, and settled in Petrea. A monarchical government was early established amongst them; and we find, in the writings of Moses, the record of the names and seats of "many kings that reigned in the land of Edom, before there reigned any king over the children of Israel."‡ They

* That the Arabs of Northern Arabia were of intermingled races, is gathered from the express notices of Scripture. Thus in *Jerem.* xxv. 24, after enumerating several Arab tribes, it is added, "and all the kings of Arabia, and all the kings of the mingled people that dwell in the desert." So also in the times of Moses and Gideon, the indiscriminate use of the terms *Ishmaelite* and *Midianite* implies that these races did not keep entirely distinct.

† *Gen.* xxxvii. 28.

‡ *Vide Gen.* xxxvi. 13, &c., and *Exod.* xv. 15. These passages mention both a *kingly* and a *ducal* government. Rosenmüller supposes that the kingly government existed only in the north-east of Edom, while simultaneously a

obstructed the passage of the Israelites into Palestine; and they were attacked and overthrown by Saul and by David.* A series of interesting political relations then commenced between Judea and Petrea. The whole of the latter country was garrisoned by David. A naval station was established by Solomon at Ezion-geber or Elath† (the modern Akaba), where he fitted out a fleet to bring him gold from Ophir. During his reign the communications between the Jewish Government and Arabia were frequent and intimate. The artificers and seamen to build and man the fleet would, in part at least, be drawn from the natives of that country; the voyage to Ophir would bring the coasting expedition into contact with its marine tribes; while Solomon himself encouraged the Arab caravans, and fostered "the traffic of the spice merchants," and the "chapmen," who, no doubt, carried back to their own people glowing accounts of what they had seen among the Jews. The renown of the Jewish monarch was so great throughout Arabia, that the queen of the distant Sheba set out to gratify her curiosity. "The report which she had heard in her own land" was so marvellous, that "she believed it not till she came and her eyes had seen it."‡ His political supremacy was also acknowledged, for "all the kings of Arabia,

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patriarchal or oligarchical rule by "dukes" subsisted at Mount Seir. He thus reconciles *Deut.* ii. 4-8, with *Numb.* xx. 14; "it is by others ingeniously supposed, that the change from an oligarchy to a monarchy took place during the wanderings of the children of Israel." *Rosenmüller*, iii. 185; *Kitto's Cyclopœdia*, art. IDUMEA.

* The predatory attack of the Amalekites on Ziklag, with David's pursuit and recovery of the spoil and of the prisoners, are highly illustrative of Arab life. The surprise of the encampment, and the slaughter of all "save four hundred young men, which rode upon camels and fled," remind one of many a raid in the time of Mahomet fifteen or sixteen centuries later. See the account in 1 *Sam.* xxx.

† "And king Solomon made a navy of ships in Ezion-geber, which is beside Elath, on the shore of the Red Sea, in the land of Edom." 1 *Kings*, ix. 26; 2 *Chron.* viii. 17.

‡ "She came to Jerusalem with a very great train, with camels that bare spices, and very much gold and precious stones." 1 *Kings* x. 2. "Neither was there any such spice as the queen of Sheba gave to king Solomon." 2 *Chron.* ix. 9.

and governors of the country, brought gold and silver unto Solomon."

Subsequent fortunes of the Idumeans.

Nor was this connexion transient. About a century later we find that Idumea was governed by a Jewish viceroy,* and that Jehoshophat built another fleet at Ezion-geber, which was wrecked by a tempest. In the following reign the inhabitants rebelled; and though they were subsequently reduced by Amaziah, who conquered Sela or Petra and gave it the name of *Jokthèel*, and by Uzziah "who built Elath" (or Akaba), "and restored it to Judah," yet they eventually became independent of the Jews.† After an ascendancy of nearly two centuries, the Jews in their turn began to suffer from their ancestral foes. In the reign of Ahaz the Edomites made incursions into Judea, and carried off many captives. Rezin, king of Syria, after besieging Jerusalem (742 B.C.), expelled the Jews from Elath, and reinstated the Edomites in its possession.‡ A few years later a body of the tribe of Simeon made a successful attack upon Petrea, where a remnant of the Amalekites still dwelt, and expelled them finally from thence. But the movement was partial, and did not affect the general prosperity of the Edomites. Unchecked by the Jews, they prosecuted in peace their mercantile speculations, and extended themselves on all sides from Bostra on the north to Dedan on the south.§ They took advantage of the adversities of the Jewish nation to invade the southern part of Judea; from which, however, they were driven by the Maccabees.‖ Eventually, they were, in part at least,

* 1 *Kings* xxii. 47; *Rosenmüller*, iii. 187. This "deputy," called elsewhere the king of Edom, joined the Israelitish and Jewish monarch in an attack upon the Moabites. 2 *Kings* iii. 9, 12-26.

† Their eventual independence coincides with the promise made to Esau: "By thy sword shalt thou live, and shalt serve thy brother; and it shall come to pass, when thou shalt have the dominion, that thou shalt break his yoke from off thy neck." *Gen.* xxvii. 40.

‡ 2 *Kings* xvi. 6, as explained by Rosenmüller, iii. 188.

§ This is evident from allusions in the Prophets; *Jer.* xlix. 8, 20-22; *Is.* xxxiv. 6, lxiii. 1; *Ezek.* xxv. 13; *Rosenm.* iii. 189. See also *Ezek.* xxvii. 16, as rendered by Hereen. Addressing the Phenicians, the prophet says, "Edom also managed thy trade, and thy great affairs: emeralds, purple, broidered work, cotton, bezoar, and precious stones, she gave thee for the wares thou deliveredst to her." *Asiatic Researches*, ii. 102.

‖ 1 *Maccabees*, v.

incorporated with the Jews by John Hyrcanus, who forced them to submit to circumcision and other Jewish customs.*

The Nabatheans.

But the Idumeans had already been supplanted in their southern possessions by the Ishmaelitish tribe of the NABATHEANS. These had hitherto lived in recesses of the Desert or upon the shore of the Red Sea, following the occupations of a nomad and of a mercantile life.† They now took possession of Petra, and from thence commanded the traffic which flowed northward through western Arabia. We first hear of them three centuries before the Christian era, baffling the attacks of the Macedonian monarchs of Babylon, at the approach of whose armies they dispersed their flocks in the unapproachable steppes of the peninsula, and defended their own property behind the rocky ramparts of Petra. Their steady pursuit of merchandise is illustrated by the fact that on one of these occasions most of the men were absent on a commercial expedition. Their manners and habits, as described by Diodorus Siculus, coincide remarkably with the manners and habits of the Arabs of our own day. Passionately loving freedom, their home was the inviolable Desert, where the springs were known to themselves alone, and whither in perfect security they be took themselves, with their flocks and herds of camels, when attacked by a foreign foe.

Boundaries of the Nabathean kingdom.

Such was the independent kingdom of the Nabatheans. It was bounded, according to Ptolemy, on the west by Egypt; on the north by Syria and Palestine; and on the south and east by the Desert and the Aelanitic Gulph. But in the latter direction its borders, as we learn from Diodorus Siculus, advanced some way

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* *Joseph. Antiq.* xiii. 9, 1; see also the authorities quoted by the translator, Whiston. It is remarkable that the Idumeans, though clearly of an Abrahamic stock, did not previously practise the rite of circumcision; and the more so as the other Abrahamic tribes farther south appear never to have abandoned it.

† See an elaborate paper by *M. Quatremère, Journ. Asiatique; Janv. Fevr. Mars*, 1835. After noticing that the Nabatheans are not alluded to either in Scripture (wherein he seems mistaken), or by Herodotus, he adds that the Greek and Latin authors, "tous s'accordent à placer dans l'Arabie la contrée qu' occupait cette nation, moins guerrière qu' active et industrieuse" p. 6, tome xv.

along the shores of the Red Sea, and into the heart of the peninsula. Pliny refers to them as the Arabians next to Syria.* And their monarchs, "the kings of Arabia," are frequently noticed in the later annals of the Jews and of the Romans, under the titles of Aretas and Obodas.†

Expedition of Ælius Gallus B.C. 24.

Whilst the prosperity of the Nabatheans was at its height a memorable attack was made by the Romans upon the spicy regions of Arabia Felix. During the reign of Augustus, B.C. 24, Ælius Gallus set out in command of a Roman army of ten thousand men, assisted by Obodas king of Petra with a thousand of his Nabatheans and five hundred Jews. The expedition started from Cleopatris (the modern Suez), and having reached Leuke Come (probably *Haurâ*),‡ a port of Nabathea on the Arabian shore of the Red Sea, was there delayed a year by sickness. The Roman army, beguiled by the treachery of the Nabathean ambassador, then traversed by circuitous and difficult routes a country alternately desert and fertile. After a march of many days, they passed through the friendly country of Aretas, a Nabathean and a kinsman of Obodas. At last they reached and took *Mariaba*, a city six miles in circumference; and thence proceeded to *Marsyaba*, the siege of which, from the strength of its fortifications and the scarcity of water, they were obliged to raise; they then retreated hurriedly along the coast toward the north. The advance, owing to the artifices of the Arabs, and the asperity of the way, occupied six months; the retreat, only two. From a port called Nera Come, they again embarked for *Myos Hormos* on the Egyptian coast. We have an account of the expedition, from the pen both of Strabo and of Pliny; and as the former was the personal friend of Ælius Gallus, his narrative may be depended upon.

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* In Nabatæis, qui sunt ex Arabia contermini Syriæ. *Hist. Nat.* xii. 37.

† Aretas and Obodas are the Greek forms of *Hârith* and *Obeid*, or *Abd*. The name of Aretas is common in Jewish and Roman history. The Arabian wife of Herod Antipas will be remembered as the daughter of Aretas king of the Arabians; and the Aretas of Damascus is familiar to the reader of the Bible. 2 *Cor.* xi. 32. In the feeble reign of Caligula, he had seized upon Damascus. See *Joseph. de Bell. Jud.* i. 4-7; *Antiq.* xiii. 15, 1.

‡ See *M. Quartremère's Mem. Journ. As.* xv. 36.

But there is a singular obscurity and confusion in the statements of both authors, arising no doubt from the strangeness of the country, the diversity of language, and the difficulty of transposing an Arabic nomenclature into a classical form. Mariaba and Marsyaba have been identified with Mâreb and Saba, capital cities of Yemen;* and in one or two other instances a likely approximation to modern names has been discovered.† But with these few exceptions, it seems impossible to recognize in the Arabia of Islam any of the numerous towns, or peoples, or districts, through which the expedition is said to have passed.‡

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* Mâreb was anciently called also Saba. They may have formed two capitals; or the one have been the appellation of the district, the other of the capital. Some Arabic geographers say that Saba was the name of the city, Mâreb of the royal residence. May they not both have been combined into one name, Mar Saba, or Marsyaba? *C. de Perc.* i. 53; *Malte Brun's Geography*, B. xxx. p. 215.

† The reader who is desirous to follow out the subject should consult two very learned and ingenious papers in the *Journal Asiatique* for July and September 1840, by M. Fulgence Fresnel, who endeavours to reconcile the varying statements of Pliny, Strabo, and Ptolemy. These papers contain some curious recognitions of the classical in modern names; but the general impression is one of surprise that, out of such extensive materials, so little common ground has been discovered between *Classical* and *Mahometan* Arabia, especially when we consider how permanent upon the whole are the names of places and tribes in that country.

‡ This obscurity is not to be wondered at. The genius of the Arabic language, so foreign in its structure and pronunciation to the Roman ear, the strangeness of the country, and the bewilderment occasioned by the unfriendly and circuitous guidance of the Arab allies, would involve the route, as well as the names, in uncertainty.

Mr. Forster says of Arabia, that "the writers of antiquity possessed both more extensive and more accurate information than ourselves" (i. 35). This conclusion I believe to be, without very great modification, erroneous. If confined to some tracts on the north-west of Arabia, and to Yemen, or at least the space between Oman and Yemen, (as it is by M. F. Fresnel, *Journal Asiatique*, Juilliet, 1840, p. 84,) it becomes more intelligible; for those parts then possessed a government in some measure civilized, and held communications with Europe. But as to the Peninsula generally, our knowledge is surely much more extensive and accurate than that of the Ancients. In their time, indeed, there was less of exclusive bigotry; but the inhabitants were infinitely more barbarous, and their sub-division into a thousand independent sections would render the acquisition of any general view of the country

Neither do we gain much knowledge of the social and political state of central and northern Arabia. The most important fact brought to light, as bearing on the subject of the present chapter,

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nearly impossible. Now, on the contrary, although Islam has excluded *Unbelievers* from a small and sacred circuit, yet it has united the Arabians under a common supremacy, and rendered it easy to gain concentrated information. We have now the advantages, at many various points, of a civilized and often literary population; of geographical works by the Arabs themselves; of professional travellers, both Mahometans and others; of a European settlement at Aden; of scientific surveys of the coast, and of much internal geography, illustrated by the wars in Arabia, from those of Mahomet to the extensive operations undertaken by the Pacha of Egypt in the present century for the subjugation of the Wahabies. Much of Arabia is still unexplored, but there is reason to believe that the unknown portions of it are chiefly sandy deserts.

But whatever may have been the knowledge of the Roman geographers, Mr. Forster has failed in obtaining from them any intelligible account of the route of Ælius Gallus. The arguments by which he carries the Roman commander across nearly the whole of Arabia seem to be singularly fanciful. The *time* passed is no decisive argument. Six months might very well be wasted by an artful Arab in conducting, by devious and difficult passages, an army from a port on the North of the Hedjâz along the Meccan range of hills to Nejrân, and thence to Yemen. Delay in carrying a body of troops through a difficult and hostile country is not to be estimated by the marches which an unencumbered traveller makes. A considerable period must also have been spent in sieges and warlike operations. In the retreat, on the contrary, a direct and much easier road was indicated, and it was traversed with all possible expedition.

Little faith is to be placed in many of Mr. Forster's conclusions. His sanguine belief in the identity of places appears often to increase with the difference of name, and the mystical *anagrammatical inversion* impalpable to ordinary eyes and ears. He thus identifies *Caripeta* with *Cariatain*: "This name has needlessly perplexed the critics. *Caripeta* is an easy an obvious misnomer, probably of transcribers, for *Cariata*, an inland town previously mentioned by Pliny, and the seat apparently of his *Carrei*, and Cariata exists at this day, on the very route in question—the Nedjd road to Yemen, in the town of Kariatain," (vol. ii. p. 314). But Kariatain thus forced into resemblance with Caripeta, is a common appellation grounded on a grammatical formation: it is a dual form, signifying "the two villages;" and has thus no connexion either with Caripeta or Cariata, the latter of which means "a (single) village."

The following are farther specimens: "The author at length was led to observe in the well-known classical denominations, *Katabania*, *Katabanum*, or *Kabatanum*, and *Kattabeni* or *Kottabani*, so many easy inversions of the

is the wide range occupied by the Nabathean nation; for it possessed a port for commerce some way down the Red Sea, and was connected (as in the case of Aretas) with influential off-shoots of the same tribe far inland.

Subsequent history of the Nabatheans.

The kingdom of Nabathea, thus extensive and powerful at the beginning of the Christian era, became gradually dependent upon Rome. It was at last subdued by Cornelius Palma the governor of Syria (A.D. 105), and annexed to the vast empire of Trajan. Out of the ruins sprang up in due time other phases of border government, and these eventually formed themselves into the Ghassânide kingdom. But the history of the dynasty of Ghassân cannot be developed without the aid of Mahometan tradition, which at this era begins first to cast the glimmer of an imperfect twilight upon Arabia; it is therefore deferred to the following chapter.

Did the Amalekites and Nabatheans retain the knowledge or tradition of their Abrahamic descent?

In the Amalekites and Nabatheans we recognize very plainly the descendants of Esau and of Ishmael. It is not necessary to suppose that the knowledge or tradition of their descent was uninterruptedly maintained in the nations themselves. The vicissitudes of conquest, migration, and combination with other tribes,

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name *Beni Kahtan*" (vol. i. 83). This again is identified with the *Bana* of Ptolemy (p. 84), and *Baenum* (p. 91). But it is most improbable that classical writers should have taken the common prefix (Beni) of every tribe and, placing it at the end, have incorporated it into the name itself. Still more unreasonable is it to trace any connexion between *Bana*, *Baenum*, and the *Beni* Kahtan. Again, by an "anagram or inversion, the *Mesha* of Moses, and the *Zames* Mons of the classical geographers prove to be one and the same name" (p. 99). These are identified with *Masœmanes*, *Mishma*, or *Mashma* Sumama, and finally "contracted into Shaman or Saman"! (p. 100.)

Diklah, the Joktanide, is "clearly discernible" in the modern *Dhu l'Khalaah* and the classical *Dhulkelastæ*. "The names Diklah, Dhulkelastæ, and Dhu l'Khalaah, will be readily recognized by orientalists, as one and the same in pronunciation" (p. 148). Few orientalists will admit this; besides that the modern name is evidently a compound, formed by the possessive *Dhu*. Contractions occur after the lapse of years, but here Mr. Forster reverses the process; and, assigning the full and uncurtailed form to modern days, refers the contraction of it to the times of Moses!

render it in the last degree improbable that the consciousness of their origin should have been preserved for so many centuries by a barbarous people possessed of no recorded memorials. Yet the name and location would alone suffice to suggest the probability of this descent to the Israelites who read the Mosaic record; and we find in the Jewish authors, inspired and uninspired, sufficient indication that such conclusion was actually drawn. The natural inference would from time to time spread from the neighbouring Jews to the tribes themselves whom it concerned, and reinforce the imperfect remnants of loose tradition still lingering in their associations, their habits, or their language. The Jews so extensively peopled the north-west of Arabia, and at one time possessed (as shown above) so great political and social influence there, that their scriptural and traditional accounts of the patriarchal age must necessarily have obtained a wide notoriety, and commanded a general acceptance among the Abrahamic tribes. When the latter, therefore, by the increase of population, migratory habit, or the force of war, penetrated southward into Central Arabia, they no doubt carried with them to their new settlements these patriarchal traditions, and reproduced them among the Bedouin tribes.

How Abrahamic tradition became blended with the legend of the Kaaba.

We learn from Mahometan tradition that the earliest inhabitants of Mecca, Medîna, and the deserts of Syria, were Amalekites; and that it was an Amalekite tribe which, attracted to Mecca by the well Zamzam, there adopted and nurtured the youthful Ishmael and his forlorn mother. The legend is a myth, or rather a travestied plagiarism from Scripture. We may conjecture the facts to have been thus: Amalekite or Idumean tribes were scattered over the north and centre of the peninsula. They formed probably the aboriginal population of Mecca, or settled there in conjunction with immigrants from Yemen, at a very remote period. Subsequently an Ishmaelitish tribe, either Nabathean or of some collateral stock, was attracted thither also by its wells and its favourable position for the caravan trade, and acquired great influence. This tribe would carry in its train the patriarchal legend of Abrahamic origin, and engraft it upon the local superstitions, which were either native or imported from Yemen.

Hence arose the mongrel worship of the Kaaba, with its Ishmaelitish legends, of which Mahomet took so great advantage.*

* It hardly need be added, that this theory is quite independent of the question whether the *Nabatheans* were an Ishmaelitish race. I believe them to have been so, and their wide-spread shoots (as evidenced by the narrative of Ælius Gallus), offer a ready and natural source for the Ishmaelitish settlement at Mecca. But, as far as regards the conjecture stated in the text, it may have been any other Abrahamic tribe, possessed, through intimacy with the Jews, of the necessary patriarchal legend of descent from Ishmael, &c., which settled at Mecca.

On the special question of the descent of the Nabatheans, M. Quatremère (*Journ. As.* xv. 98), and after him M. C. de Perceval (vol. i. 35), hold that they are not Arabs. But the latter admits that "the rams of Nebaioth" (*Is.* lx. 7,) refer to the Nabatheans "(Nâbit des Arabes,) *la postérité d'Ismœl*" (vol. i. 180).

M. Quatremère's arguments against the Ishmaelite descent of the Nabatheans are the following:—1. The *Nabatheans are not reckoned by the Mahometans as Arabs*, which they would have been if descended from Ishmael. But the reason why they are not so reckoned is because of their foreign manners and dialect, acquired by settlement in the northern country and long contact with the Syrians and Chaldeans. *C. de Perc.* i. 37. They spoke both Chaldean and Arabic, so that the former infused itself into their idiom of the latter. The Arabs, punctilious above all things in the purity of their tongue, excluded these barbarians in speech from the pale of Arabs, and by consequence from the privilege of a supposed descent from Ishmael. An intelligent Hajji, who had travelled in Arabia, when questioned about this tribe, gave me the following reply; "*They are still extant*," he said, "*but they do not speak pure Arabic, and are not therefore strictly speaking Arabs.*" II. *Arab tradition does not mention this descent;* but Arab tradition is original and trustworthy only as far back as the Christian era, and then only for a few particulars regarding the ancestry of the Coreish. Beyond that it is mere plagiarism from the Jews, and possesses no authority. It is most uncritical to rest upon it at all: much more to regard it (as M. Quatremère has done) as evidence to disprove the plain intimations of the Old Testament. III. *The name of the Arab tribe is written with* a ط (نبط or انباط) whereas "Nebaioth," the son of Ishmael, is written both in Hebrew and Arabic with a ت (نبيت or نابت). There is no doubt that the Arabs do make this difference, and if their authority were that of a witness speaking from original knowledge, it would have much weight; but this has been shown not to be the case. Besides, the two letters are not invariably kept distinct. In another of the sons of Ishmael, *Tema*, the Hebrew letter corresponding with ت is rendered by ط, thus طيما; *v. Kâtib al Wâckidi*, p. 8. IV. Lastly, *the Mahometans are acquainted with a tribe called Nabath-*

A knowledge of the true God long preserved among the Abrahamic tribes;

Regarding the religious tenets and customs of the Abrahamic races of Arabia we have but scanty information. That they originally possessed a knowledge of GOD, and of the verities which formed the groundwork of the faith of Abraham, cannot be doubted. We are assured by the inspired penman that Abraham cared for the moral culture and religious training of his progeny; and for some time at least, "they kept the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment."* Four centuries later, Jethro "the priest of Midian," appears still to have followed the worship of the one true God.† Again, the manner in which Balaam, the son of Beor, addressed Balak the king of the Moabites, and the nature of the rites performed at the interview between them, prove that, however much they may have fallen away from the practice enjoined by the faith of Abraham, they yet preserved some knowledge of that faith itself. Thus also the whole tenor of the sayings of Job, who was planted in the centre of the Abrahamic races, and of his

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eans, and ascribe to them a different origin, some tracing the descent from Ham, others from Shem, but none from Ishmael. To this I again reply that their evidence is mere conjecture, and no authority whatever. If we admit their authority, it would follow of course that the Mahometans allude to some other tribe under the name *Anbât*, different from the Nabatheans of the Jews and Classics.

It will be objected that if a Nabathean tribe settled at Mecca, its own tradition of descent from Ishmael would have prevented the Mahometan opinion as to the non-Arab origin of the Nabathean tribe. But we need not suppose that the tribe which settled at Mecca was *called* Nabathean. It may have dropped that name as being by repute un-Arabic, or it may never have been called by it. The great Nabathean nation possessed wide-spread settlements in various quarters. Many of these had probably their own names, though all styled *by foreigners* under the generic title of Nabatheans.

Still, if the objection be deemed insuperable, it is not by any means necessary for the theory, in the text, to hold that the Meccan Ishmaelites were Nabatheans: they may have been Kedarenes, or any other Ishmaelitish race, in which the tradition of Abrahamic descent was revived and kept alive by Jewish aid.

* *Gen.* xviii. 19. The expressions used are general, and not confined to the branch of Isaac:—"For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, *and they shall keep the way of* THE LORD, and do justice and judgment, that the LORD may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him."

† Compare *Exod.* ii. 16, iii. 1, with xviii. 11 & 12.

friends who belonged to various Abrahamic tribes, implies a minute acquaintance with traditional and pure religion. It is reasonable to infer that such knowledge was general, and that it was kept up for many generations among the several branches of the stock of Abraham.

but early perverted by idolatry.

We gather, at the same time, that these tribes manifested a rapid and widely spread departure from the simplicity of Abraham's worship, and the purity of his doctrines. The seeds of this defection were already sown in the family of his father, Terah, who "served other gods."* In the third generation from Nahor, we read of the teraphim, or images, of Laban.† The Israelites committed idolatry while they passed through the countries lying between Egypt and Palestine;‡ and they probably were tempted thereto by the example of the Abrahamic tribes inhabiting that region. One instance is expressly mentioned in which they were induced by the Moabites to join in the worship of their idol Baal Peor.§ Many centuries after, the Idumeans of Petra exercised a similar influence. Amaziah, king of Judea, after he "was come from the slaughter of the Edomites, brought the gods of the children of Seir, and set them up to be his gods, and bowed down himself before them, and burned incense unto them."‖ Such indeed was the natural result of the position and circumstances of the Abrahamic tribes. With the same tendencies towards idolatry as the Israelites, but without the constant checks which repressed them, it would have been strange if they had not fallen into gross and debasing Paganism.

Some religious truth communicated by the Abrahamic tribes to the Arabs.

Declension into idolatry must in the end have displaced the memory both of Abraham and his religion, had not the neighbourhood of the Jews, and intercourse with them, revived together with the knowledge of patriarchal descent, some acquaintance also with the purer faith of their common progenitor. Political con-

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* *Joshua*, xxiv. 2.

† *Gen.* xxxi. 19. Whatever these teraphim were, they intimate at least some departure from the pure worship and belief of Abraham.

‡ *Amos*, v. 26; *Acts*, vii. 42.

§ *Numbers*, xxv. 1, &c.

‖ 2 *Chron.* xxv. 14.

with the Jews settled at numerous points throughout Arabia, and the frequent passage of the Arab caravans through the borders of Palestine and Syria, would deepen and extend this knowledge. How far it affected the tenets and practices of the Arabs generally we cannot with any exactness say; but there are traces of a wide spread influence. Circumcision was received amongst them apparently as an Abrahamic rite; and the story of Abraham, grievously distorted indeed and shorn of its spiritual bearing, but yet possessing a germ of truth, was current at Mecca prior to Islam and, inwrought into the ritual of the Kaaba, was adopted by the whole Arab race.

Christianity confirmed the general impression.

The rise of Christianity, and the confirmation given by its emissaries to the main purport of these traditional facts, would impart a fresh credit to them. The birthplace of the new religion bordered close upon the residence of the Ishmaelite Arabs, and its political influence soon became paramount in Nabathea and Idumea. Both circumstances would subject the inhabitants to the frequent solicitations of the early missionaries. Paul himself spent some time in their country.* In the beginning of the third century, the Governor of Arabia, anxious to learn the doctrines of Origen, sent an urgent summons for him through the Prefect of Egypt. Shortly after, a heresy having gained ground in Arabia, which represented the soul as perishing at death to be raised again at the judgment day, a numerous synod was assembled, and Origen, again summoned, convinced the innovators of their error.† In the fourth century, Petra was the residence of a Metropolitan, whose diocese embraced the ancient Idumea and Nabathea.‡ When we reflect upon these efforts, and the zeal of the anchorites, who are said to have peopled some of the deserts with their solitary cells, it may appear surprising that the countries about the Ælanitic Gulph were not more thoroughly evangelized, and their people more extensively brought within the pale of Christianity. But there were strong countervailing influences at work,

* *Galatians*, i. 17.

† *Euseb. Hist. Eccl.* vi. 19-37.

‡ Under the name of *Palestina Tertia*, or *Salutaris*. This Metropolitan was subsequently placed under the Patriarch of Jerusalem.

Jewish as well as Arabian, which the evangelists of that day were unable to overcome. These will be referred to farther in the next chapter.

Mercantile history.

We shall now endeavour to sketch the MERCANTILE PROGRESS of the border tribes and cities, and trace the causes of their decadence.

Early establishment of caravans.

It has been well remarked by Heeren that the grand feature of ancient commerce, as distinguished from that of modern times, is that it was confined almost exclusively to land. The sea traffic was strictly subordinate, and resorted to only in cases of necessity or of short and easy coasting voyages. A long and uninterrupted continent, in later times the greatest obstacle to commerce, constituted then its chief facility. The desert steppes of Asia formed the mercantile ocean of the ancients; the companies of camels, their fleets. But the barbarous hordes of those wild lands rendered it perilous for a few merchants alone to attempt such prolonged and arduous journeys; and hence the necessity for *Caravans* to assemble at fixed spots and conventional periods, and travel in a common direction by known and determined routes. Thus the marts and main points of traffic became settled and notorious throughout the ancient world. "The course of the caravan," says Heeren, "was not a matter of free choice, but of established custom. In the vast steppes of sandy deserts, which they had to traverse, nature had sparingly allotted to the traveller a few scattered places of rest, where, under the shade of palm trees, and beside the cool fountains at their feet, the merchant and his beast of burden might enjoy the refreshment rendered necessary by so much suffering. Such places of repose became *entrepôts* of commerce, and not unfrequently the sites of temples and sanctuaries, under the protection of which the merchant prosecuted his trade, and to which the pilgrim resorted."*

Two great lines of commerce;

These remarks are especially applicable to Arabia. Even in the times of Jacob, as already noticed, Ishmaelite traders had

* *Heeren's Researches: Africa*, i. 23. The last sentence bears upon the origin and rise of Mecca. But it will still be a question which had the priority, the temple or the mercantile station?

established a caravan traffic between Egypt and the East. As the countries to the north and west of Arabia became more densely peopled and civilization advanced, the traffic extended and settled down into fixed channels with established stations. One great line of commerce took its rise in Yemen and, guided by the north-westerly trend of the coast, proceeded through the Hedjâz, and thence towards the Mediterranean. the western through the Hejâz, the eastern by the Persian Gulph.

From the cursory notices of ancient authors "it is evident," writes the learned and accurate Heeren, "that the caravan road extended along the Arabian Gulph, most probably touched upon Mecca, the ancient Macoraba, and so arrived at the frontiers of Arabia Felix." This route avoided the parched and weary deserts of Najd on the one hand, and the impracticable cliffs of the shore on the other; and kept within a region where wells and provender were met with at convenient distances. A second main channel of trade began also in Hadhramaut at the southern extremity of the peninsula, struck directly north to the Persian Gulph, and thence still north into Persia, or west into Syria. Egypt and southern Palestine were supplied by the former route, Tyre and Palmyra by the latter.*

* Regarding both these routes I quote the interesting observations of Heeren. It is remarkable how distinctly the eastern line is referred to in Jewish prophecy.

Of the western route Heeren says: "This writer (Strabo) mentions at least one of the intervening stations, which the caravans from Arabia Felix usually passed through, and determines the time which the journey occupied. They consumed seventy days in going from Yemen to Petra, and passed in their route a place named *Albus Pagus* (Λευκὴ κώμη of the Greeks, and the *Havra* or Avara of the Arabians). This place is situated on the Arabian Gulph, under 25° N. Lat., on the boundaries of the fertile country of Nejed, belonging to Central Arabia. Hence it is evident that the caravan road extended along the Arabian Gulph, most probably touched upon Mecca, the ancient Macoraba, and so arrived at the frontier of Arabia Felix. By this route the caravans would enjoy the advantage of passing through fertile regions in the midst of their journey; while deeper in the interior, they would have had to traverse long and dreary sandy deserts. The number of days' journey agrees very well with the distance. From Mariaba to Petra is reckoned about 1,260 geographical miles, which, divided by sixteen, the ordinary distance which caravans travel in a day, amount to seventy." *Heeren's Researches: Asiatic Nations*, vol. ii. p. 106. See also the detail of routes in

The commerce enriched both the traders and the carriers.

This commerce afforded a vast field of employment for the Arab tribes. Some traded on their own account, and settled down as the occupants of the emporia or commercial cities in the vicinity. Others, without directly engaging in the traffic, became the carriers of it. They received hire for their camels, and payment for the insurance of protection by the way. A frontier custom duty was also probably exacted. The carriers continued in their nomad habits. Both were enriched, but the traders most.

Gerra, on the eastern route.

Large commercial stations rapidly grew up. Of those on the north-eastern coast the chief was Gerra (the modern Lachsa), which commanded the Indian traffic of the Persian Gulph, the Euphrates, and the Tigris, as well as of Palmyra. It was, accord-

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appendix D. vol. iii. p. 488, *et seq.*, and the valuable map illustrating the lines of traffic, in vol. i.

The following quotation applies to the eastern routes:—"This same writer (Strabo) has left us also some few particulars respecting the trading routes of Eastern Arabia. It was the inhabitants of the city of Gerra, on the Persian Gulph, who more especially carried on the caravan trade. They kept up a commercial intercourse with the marts of Hadramaut, the journey to which occupied forty days, the road stretching right across the great sandy desert in the south-east of the Peninsula, and not along the coast. The distance in a direct line from Hadramaut to Gerra is not less than from 650 to 700 miles, and would consequently require a forty days' journey.

"Besides this, there existed, as we learn from the words of the Prophet, a direct intercourse between the Eastern Coast of the Peninsula, and Gerra and Phenicia. For, he says, the merchants of Dedan brought the merchandize of the Persian Gulph to Tyre (*Ezek.* xxvii. 15,) whose route must consequently have run through the north-eastern part of the land. This fact is still further proved by a passage from Isaiah, who, when he threatens Arabia with a foreign invasion, forgets not to mention the interruption which it would cause to its commerce. "*In the wilderness of Arabia, ye will be benighted, oh, ye caravans of Dedan! To the thirsty bring out water, inhabitants of Tema; bring forth bread for the fugitives! for they fly before the sword, and before the fury of war.*"* The trading caravans of Dedan, which had hitherto journeyed undisturbed, were to be driven from their usual route by the approach of the enemy, and compelled to pass their nights in the wilderness, where the hospitable tribe of Tema, out of compassion, would bring them water and bread." *Ibid.* pp. 107, 108.

* *Isaiah* xxi. 13-15, with *Gesenius' Commentary.* "These passages of the Prophets are of the greater importance, from the seldomness with which caravans are mentioned by historical writers. It is from them, and not from the historians, that may be gathered the extent of the commerce of the ancient world."

ing to Strabo, a Chaldean or Babylonian colony; and we learn from Agatharcides that its Arabian and Indian commerce rendered its people one of the richest in the world.* This traffic was, however, far removed from Western Arabia, and did not intimately affect the interests of the Arabs in the vicinity of Mecca.

Particulars regarding the western route.

The western line along the Hedjâz demands a closer attention. The products of Yemen, its southern terminus, are stated by Herodotus to have been frankincense, myrrh, cinnamon, cassia, and ledanon.† To these may be added gold and precious stones, the proper products of Arabia; ivory, ebony, and spices, which were imported from India and Africa.‡ The Jews under Solomon took advantage, as we have seen, of this line of commerce; they also opened it up to the Phenicians, who joined them in their naval expedition in the Red Sea.§ Four hundred years later (about 600 B.C.), the denunciations of Ezekiel against the haughty Tyre prove that a busy and constant intercourse still subsisted, by which the Phenician marts, in exchange for Syrian wares, were replenished with the rarities of Yemen.‖ Again, three or four centuries passed, and we find from Eratosthenes that the

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* *Heeren*, vol. ii. pp. 225-233, &c.

† *Herodotus* iii. 107. Cinnamon, however, belongs not to Arabia, but to India. *Heeren, ibid.* pp. 96-240.

‡ *Ibid.* p. 6. The imports at Suez are now, coffee, gum arabic, wax from Yemen and the Hejâz, mother of pearl, pepper, cloves, ginger, cardamums and other spices, perfumes, tamarinds, hides, &c. *Burton's Medina and Mecca*, v. i. p. 264.

§ 1 *Kings*, ix. 26 & 27.

‖ *Ezek.* xxvii. 19-24, which Heeren translates "*Wadan and Javan brought thee from Sanaa, sword blades, cassia and cinnamon, in exchange for thy wares. The merchants of Saba and of Raama traded with thee; the best spices, precious stones, and gold brought they to thee for thy wares. Haran, Canna, Aden, Saba, traded with thee.*" He adds: "Some of these places, as Aden, Canna, and Aaran, all celebrated sea-ports on the Indian Sea, as well as Sanaa and Saba, or Mariaba, still the capital of Yemen, have retained their names unchanged to the present day; the site of others, as Wadan, on the Straits of Babel Mandab, rest only on probable conjecture. These accurate statements of the Prophet, at all events prove what a special knowledge the inhabitants of Palestine had of Happy Arabia, and how great and active the intercourse with that country must have been." *Heeren's As. Res.* vol. ii. p. 98.

Minæans, or Arabs of the Hedjâz, were still the carriers of the Yemen traffic from Hadhramaut to Ayla (Akaba); and the stages, stated expressly to be seventy, coincide exactly with the number in use by the same route at the present day.*

Growth of trade and prosperity of Arabia under Rome.

The Roman empire, gradually extending its irresistible rule to the confines of Arabia, fostered and at first increased the traffic of the Arabian caravans. The Nabatheans of Petra prospered. They were enabled to prosecute, in comparative peace and security their mercantile projects. Military roads aided the commerce. From Ayla or Akaba, a great highway led to Petra, branching off in one direction towards Gaza on the Mediterranean, and on the other towards Damascus.† Upon these lines arose large and thriving emporia. Stately and luxurious cities, from Damascus southward, emulated the magnificence of the queenly Palmyra. "Modern travellers," writes Heeren, "have brought to light the remains of the cities east of the Lake of Tiberias and the Dead Sea (the ancient Decapolis and Havra). . . . the magnificent ruins of Gerasa (Dsieres),‡ Gadara, and Philadelphia (Amman), some of which are little inferior to those of Palmyra. Decayed temples, colonnades, and amphitheatres, show the former grandeur and opulence of these cities, when they were the seats of the Indian-Arabian commerce."§ Still farther south was the the ancient Bostra; and beyond that Petra, Leuke Come, and the other marts of the Nabatheans. It may safely be assumed that Mecca also, as the half way station between Yemen and Petra,

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* See *Sprenger's Mohammad*, p. 10, where the seventy stages are detailed. Theophrastus also gives some curious particulars regarding the traffic in frankincense, myrrh, and cassia, with Saba and *Adramotitis* (which corresponds evidently with Hadhramaut). *Heeren's As. Res.* vol. ii. p. 98.

† These were the routes still in use in Mahomet's time for the Syrian caravans. Hâshim, the great grandfather of Mahomet, died at Ghazza (Gaza), when on a mercantile expedition to Syria. His property was brought back from thence. *Kâtib al Wâckidi*, p. 14; *Sprenger*, p. 30.

‡ See the beautiful daguerrotype views of Jerash, with its wilderness of ruined columns pillars and temples, in the illustrated edition of *Keith's Evidence of Prophecy*, published in 1848.

§ *Heeren's As. Res.* vol. ii. p. 110.

flourished in a corresponding manner, and grew into a populous emporium.

We have already traced the history of Petra, with its seaport Ayla or Akaba, from the Jewish monarchs to the commencement of the Christian era. Under the auspices of Rome, Petra rose, along with her dependencies, to an incredible opulence. Unheeded in the desert, and for centuries forgotten, the stately ruins of the hill-encircled city and its chiselled rocks still remain an evidence that may not be gainsayed of the mighty traffic once passing through the marts of Petra, of the princely magnificence of her merchants, of the truth of history, and of the unerring certainty of prophetic denunciation.* Pliny and Strabo both describe the city in its unmistakeable features. Athenodoras the Stoic visited it, and related with admiration to Strabo his friend the excellence of the government under a native prince, and the security with which Romans and other foreigners resided there.† It need hardly be added that this prosperity was entirely dependent upon the caravan trade, which at this entrepôt changed carriage, and passed from the hands of the southern to those of the northern merchants. To this cause Diodorus Siculus attributes the superiority of the Nabatheans over the other Bedouin tribes:—"Their commercial pursuits," he says, "are the chief cause of their greater prosperity. For many of the tribe follow the business of transporting to the Mediterranean, frankincense, myrrh, and other costly spices, which are transferred to them by the carriers from Arabia Felix."‡ Strabo also writes that the merchandise of the Arabian Gulph used to be transported from Leuke Come on the Red Sea, to Petra; thence to Rhinocolura (*Al Arîsh*), a town upon the Medi- Petra.

* No better proof of the marvellous fulfilment of these prophecies can be given than that by Keith, in the edition of his work above referred to, in which modern art has been happily pressed into the service of prophecy to illustrate by photographic sketches the chief scenes of prophesied desolation. In the palmy days of its regal magnificence, who could have foretold that Petra, secure apparently behind its rocky embattlements, would have become utterly waste and desolate, rather than Damascus or any other city.

† *Strabo*, xvi.

‡ See *Forster's Arabia*, vol. i. 224.

terranean; and so to other ports.* And Pliny notices the double route which befurcated from Petra northward to Palmyra, and westward to Gaza.†

Eventual influence of Rome annihilated the caravan trade.

It was thus that, in the early part of the Christian era, the Nabatheans reached the height of their glory, and extended themselves northwards into Syria, and southwards towards the Hedjâz. But the power of Rome, which had thus fostered the Arabian trade, eventually sapped the prosperity of the caravans of the Hedjâz and of Petra, by substituting for them transport by ship along the Red Sea.

Ancient traffic between the Red Sea and India.

In very remote times there is reason to believe that the Egyptians held a trans-marine intercourse with the nations of India;‡ it has been clearly ascertained that at some periods they manned fleets upon the Red Sea, and thus communicated with the shores of Arabia.§ That there existed a direct trade between Yemen and India from an early period is equally certain. Speaking of Muza (or Mocha), the author of the Periplus says

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* *Strabo*, as above.

† *Hist. Nat.* vi. 32. "Nabatæi Arabiæ populus, oppidum includunt Petram nomine in convalle, * * * circumdatum montibus inaccessis. Huc convenit utrumque bivium eorum qui et Syria (*al* Syriæ) Palmyram petiere, et eorum, qui ab Gaza venerunt." *Vide Heeren's As. Res.* vol. ii. p. 45; and *Journ. Asiatique*, vol. xv. p. 20.

‡ See *Heeren's Res. Africa*, vol. ii. p. 273; and *As. Res.* vol. iii. p. 407.

§ *Heeren's As. Res.* vol. iii. pp. 382, 405, and appendix C, p. 409. The commerce, according to Arrian (Periplus), was conducted by Arabian navigators and traders, between Broach and Zanguebar. In return for frankincense and other Arabian articles, the products of India, thus described by Arrian, were bartered. "Moreover indigenous productions, such as corn, rice, butter (*ghi*), oil of sesamum, coarse and fine cotton goods, and cane honey (*sugar*), are regularly exported from the interior of Ariaka (Concan), and from Barygaza (Broach), to the opposite coast. Some particular vessels are purposely destined for this trade; others engage in it only as occasion or opportunity offers." Heeren well observes, that this navigation was entirely independent of the "Græco-Indian commerce," and was in fact much earlier than it. Arrian adds: "This navigation was regularly managed," *i.e.* according to the monsoons, which, by their alternations facilitated the communication. The *butter* is no doubt the *oil of milk* noticed by Ctesias in his *Indica*, c. xxii. and "answers to our *ghi*." *Heeren's As. Res.* vol. iii. p. 407; *and Sprenger's Life of Mohammad*, p. 15, note 2.

that it "was wholly inhabited by Arab shipowners and sailors, who traded to the opposite port of Barygaza (Broach), with the productions of their native country."*

So long as this commerce was confined to the Indian Ocean, and did not penetrate the Red Sea, it supplied material for the caravans of Yemen and Petra, and ministered to the prosperity of the Arab tribes. But Roman energy was not satisfied with this mediate carriage. The enterprising merchants of the day projected a direct traffic between the ports of India and the Red Sea itself; and casting aside the Arabian carriers with their intervening harbours,† they landed the goods of India and of Yemen at Arsinoe or Cleopatris (our modern Suez), and at the other emporia on the Egyptian shore of the Red Sea.‡

The Romans established a direct trade by sea to Suez and other Egyptian ports.

This proved a fatal blow to the caravan trade of Arabia. The speed, the ease, and the economy of the maritime communication were quickly perceived and taken advantage of; while the slow, expensive, and laborious desert route, with its whole system of carriage upon camels, fell into rapid and irretrievable disuse. The seaport towns of Yemen alone retained something of their importance; the land commerce gradually melted away; with it the merchant stations decayed, and at length became utterly desert. Such is the tale which the stately pillars and ruined palaces of Petra, of Jerash, and of Philadelphia, recite, after the lapse of sixteen centuries, to the wonder-stricken traveller.

Consequent destruction of the Arabian carrier trade;

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* *Periplus*, pp. 10-18; *Heeren's As. Res.* vol. iii. p. 408.

† *Vide Sprenger*, p. 15. Strabo, in his account of the expedition of Ælius Gallus, after describing the former course of merchandise to Petra, adds — "But now it is mostly brought down the Nile to Alexandria; for the products of Arabia, with those of India, are carried to *Myos Hormos* (a port on the western shore of the Red Sea): then transferred by camels to Coptos in the Thebaid: and thence to Alexandria by the canal of the Nile." *Strabo Lib.* xvi.; *vide Forster's Geography of Arabia*, vol. ii. p. 285.

‡ We have an incidental confirmation of the European trade on the Red Sea in the time of Mahomet, in the shipwreck about the beginning of the seventh century of a Grecian ship off Jiddah. The wood was employed towards rebuilding the Kaaba, and the Captain, named Bâcûm and described as a Grecian merchant acquainted with architecture, assisted in the work. *Kâtib al Wâckidi*, p. 27; *Hishâmi*, p. 41; *Tabari*, p. 73; *Sprenger*, p. 84.

hastened by the troubled state of the Syro-Persian frontier.

Another cause co-operated with this fatal change. The feeble rule of Constantinople no longer held the Arab tribes in check, as the iron sceptre of Rome had done. The Persian monarchy, and its dependent kingdom Hîra, made constant inroads upon the Syrian frontier; and Syria thus became an arena for the frequent struggles of the two empires. The Government of northern Arabia fell into weakness and disorganization. No longer attracted by the gains of commerce, ever and anon exposed to the inroad of Persian armies, the inhabitants of Petra and the other commercial ports along the whole line to Yemen, felt their native love of free and predatory life return with a fresh and unopposed vigour. Gladly casting off the restraints of walls and the formality of settled habits, they again roamed, as their fathers before them had roamed, the true sons of the desert.

The Arab merchants and carriers betake themselves again to a nomad life.

The entire line of commercial stations as far as Yemen is affected.

A change so vital and so wide spread as the drying up of the full current of merchandise, which from time immemorial had fertilized the peninsula by its perennial stream, and the fall and abandonment of populous cities that were solely dependent thereon, must needs have been followed by much distress, and by political movements both radical and extensive, throughout Arabia. Besides the imposing ruins which from Petra to Damascus still meet the eye, there were no doubt farther south many other scenes of like desertion and misery. It is probable that the disappearance of such tribes as the people of Ad and Thamûd (attributed by tradition to divine vengeance), may be due to this cause. Both lay to the north of Mecca in the direct line of the traffic,* and both

* This has been satisfactorily shown by Sprenger. *Life of Mahomet*, p. 13. The two tribes were related to one another both by blood and by position. The Thamûdites certainly inhabited the valley of Hijr, between Medîna and Syria. *Hishâmi*, p. 395. We have also the testimony of Tabari and Ghazzali for placing the Adites north of Mecca, and near the Thamûdites. I do not at all follow C. de Perceval's theory of the Adites. The Thamûdites are apparently the same people as are mentioned under a similar name by Diodorus Siculus and Ptolemy; the latter places them near the Nabatheans. They are also probably the same tribe as furnished the *Equites Saraceni Thamudeni*, who were posted under the commander of Egypt, and stationed in Palestine. They lived in abodes hewn, like those of Petra, in the rocks of the valley of Hijr, where they killed the camel of the Prophet Sâlih, sent

would suffer from its stoppage. Other calamities of drought or of tempest may have been superadded; and following, perhaps, upon some impious act (possibly the contemptuous or injurious treatment of a Jewish teacher or Christian missionary), would be construed by the superstitious Arabs into marks of the wrath of God,* and thus come to be regarded as the cause of a downfal really owing to the failure of mercantile resources. Similar distress, followed by depopulation, by emigration, or by the adoption of Bedouin for settled habits of life, resulted more or less throughout Arabia. Yemen and Hadhramaut, as the great southern terminus of the lines both towards the Persian Gulph and the Mediterranean Sea, suffered from the entire and fatal disruption of their mercantile relations. Whole tribes of Bedouin Arabs from the neighbourhood, with their herds of camels, had been wont to receive constant employment in the carriage of the merchandise, and a large stationary population had grown up, equally though indirectly, dependent on the same trade. The business which had for ages supported the carrier tribes now utterly ceased, and with it the income of the overgrown cities. The Bedouin carriers betook themselves without difficulty again

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to reclaim them. *Coran*, vii. 74, &c. Both he and Hûd, (the prophet rejected by the Adites,) were possibly Jewish emissaries or Christian evangelists.

* The superstition of Mahomet is illustrated by his passage through this valley, in his expedition to Tabuk. "And when Mahomet reached the valley of Hijr, he alighted there and pitched his camp, and the people drew water from the fountains. And when it was even, the prophet said, 'Drink not of the water of this place, not even a drop; and perform not your ablutions with it; and the dough that ye have kneaded therewith, give it to the camels, eat not of it; and let no one of you go forth of the camp this night, unless he have a companion with him. And they obeyed, excepting two men; and one of them had his neck wrenched by the way, and the other was carried by the winds and cast upon the two hills of the Bani Ṭai. And it was told Mahomet; and he said, 'Did not I prohibit you from going out alone, any one without his companion?' And he prayed for the man whose neck was injured, and he was cured, and the Bani Tai returned the other man."

It is said that as Mahomet passed by the valley of Hijr, he wrapped his clothes over his mouth, and urged on his camel, and said, "Enter not the houses of the transgressors, except weeping, for fear lest that happen to you which overtook them." *Hishâmi*, p. 396.

to a nomad life. But the settled population had no such resource; they were forced by the necessities of a fast-failing capital and hourly-growing want, to migrate in quest of a less over-stocked country.*

The failure of commerce the probable cause of the great emigrations from Hadhramaut northwards.

To this cause may be attributed the vast emigrations which, early in the Christian era, set northwards from amongst the teeming population of Arabia Felix. With the *result* of these migratory movements, the student of the early history of Arabia is familiar. They replenished the desert with new tribes of roaming Bedouins,

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* There is a very remarkable passage in the Coran bearing on the cessation of traffic between Yemen and Syria. "The tribe of Saba" are the inhabitants of Yemen.

Verily there was to the tribe of Saba, a sign in their habitations;—

Two gardens on the right hand and on the left:—

"Eat of the provision of your Lord and give thanks unto him; the country is goodly, and the Lord forgiving."

But they turned aside, wherefore WE sent upon them the flood of *Al Irem;*

And WE changed for them their two gardens so that they bore bitter fruit, and the tamarisk, and some few jujube trees.

Thus WE rewarded them because they were ungrateful; what! do WE reward any (thus) but the ungrateful?

And WE placed between them and the cities which WE have blessed (*i.e.* Syria), cities at easy distances, and WE fixed therein (convenient) stages; saying, *Travel thereby during the night and during the day in safety.*

But they said, *Lord! put greater distances between (the stages of) our journeys.*

And they injured themselves, and WE made them a proverb, and dispersed them with a total dispersion.

Verily in this there is a sign unto every one that is patient and grateful.

Sura, xxxiv. 15-19.

The Merchants of Yemen repined at the short and easy stages between their own country and Syria, and desired to double them up, so as to get their goods conveyed cheaper by having fewer stages to pay for. Wherefore the Lord destroyed the intervening cities indeed according to their wish, but at the same time dried up their trade, and "dispersed them with a total dispersion." Here we have the catastrophe traced to a cause which had no possible effect in bringing it about. It was probably the perception or apprehension that their trade was failing, which led to the desire to lengthen the stages, and thereby reduce their number and the consequent cost of the trip.

The above seems a more natural interpretation than that of the commentators who, translating the petition "Lord! lengthen our journeys" literally, ascribe it "to covetousness, that the poor being obliged to be longer on the road, they might make greater advantage in letting out their cattle, and furnishing the traveller with provisions." *Sale, in loco.*

while they brought to many of the central and northern cities large bands of immigrants, clamorous for a settlement in their vicinity, and ready if refused to extort it by force. From the great family of CAHLÂN (descended from Cahtân), the AZDITE branch supplied to Mecca the tribe of the *Khozâa*, and to Medîna the *Aus* and *Khazraj*, while to Syria it gave the dynasty of *Ghassân*. Another branch of the same stock sent forth to Hîra the royal lineage of the *Lakhmite* tribe; to Central Arabia the famous nomad race of *Kinda*, who long held the supremacy there; to Northern Arabia the *Bani Tai*, and to Najrân the *Bani Madhij*. The family of *Himyar* again (descended likewise from Cahtân), furnished, through the line of *Codhâa*, the *Bani Kalb* to Dûmat al Jandal; and the *Bani Odzra*, *Joheina*, and other important tribes to the north of the peninsula, Irac and Mesopotamia. These are but a small specimen of the multitudes which this mighty movement cast forth from the south, and caused to take root in the central or northern districts of Arabia. The exodus long continued, until the population at last adjusted itself to the natural resources of the country.

Likely effect upon Mecca.

While the stations and emporia between Syria and Bâbal Mandab decayed or disappeared, while Yemen and Petra rendered up the whole or a large portion of their inhabitants to the desert, Mecca, the important half-way mart upon the great western line, could not escape its share in the calamity. What happened in other quarters took place also there, though upon a reduced scale. Numerous families descended from Adnân (the remote ancestor of the Coreish) were compelled from time to time to migrate towards the East. Among these are to be found many of the important tribes of Najd (as the *Ghatafân*, *Sulaim*, *Hawâzin*, the *Bani Bakr* and *Bani Taghlib*, the *Mozeina*, and the *Bani Tamîm*), which afterwards played a conspicuous part in the history of the peninsula. It may be concluded that, at this period, Mecca lost the consequence which, as the ancient Macoraba, it possessed, and dwindled down into an insignificant village. Deserted by so many of its native tribes, it fell a prey (as will be shown in the succeeding chapter) to the attack of successive invaders from the south. But it possessed, in its shrine and universally recognized worship,

a principle (unknown at Petra or Palmyra) of life and prosperity, which enabled it to survive the fall of commerce. Gradually it recovered from the shock; and, in the middle of the fifth century, Cussai, a native of Coreishite lineage, again enlarged its limits, cleared away the encroaching shrubs, and having reclaimed many branches of the Coreishite tribe from the nomad habits into which they had fallen, resettled them in their ancient township. Though no longer placed on one of the highways of the world, Mecca still carried on a local and limited trade in grain and leather, in spices and in dried fruits, with Syria and with Yemen; and this commerce contributed, with the national pilgrimage to its shrine, to restore it to a permanent though reduced importance. Such may probably have been the early history of Mecca.*

Medîna.

The importance of Medîna (never very great till the Hegira) was less affected than Mecca by the cessation of commerce, because it lay some way to the east of the high road of the Syrian caravans, and it possessed a more fertile soil on which to fall back.

Gradual readjustment of commercial relations.

Long before MAHOMET appeared, Arabia had recovered from the unsettlement which the great change in the traffic of Asia with Europe had occasioned, and her internal relations had adjusted themselves to the lower level of prosperity on which she was to stand;—until a new and unexpected fortune should invest her with a lustre unparalleled in her previous annals, and cause the treasures of the world again to flow (not now as the exchange of commerce, but as the tribute of supremacy) in a grateful and continuous stream towards the cities of the sacred Hejâz.

* There is nothing in Arabian tradition (excepting the verses of the Coran just quoted) bearing upon the cause to which I have here attributed the migrations from Yemen and Mecca. The ancient mercantile prosperity is, from its great antiquity, unknown to native sources; the commercial change was too slow, and its first *results* too gradual, obscure, and imperceptible to the looker-on of the day, to become the subject of tradition, which in general seizes only upon tangible events and actions such as are apparent on the surface. The emigrations being occasioned by an impulse long at work, but not patent on the surface at any particular point, were ascribed to other events, which might indeed have formed concomitant influences or proximate causes (as the apprehended breach of the dam at Mareb, internal dissension, &c.) but are utterly inadequate alone, and in themselves, to account for so general and continued a movement.

CHAPTER THIRD.

Ante-Mahometan History of Arabia, from the Sources preserved to us by Mahometan Tradition.

Object of the chapter.

In this chapter I propose, from the native tradition of the country, to trace nearly to the era of Islam the history of the various tribes of the peninsula,—their rise, their progress, their position in the sixth century; and in conclusion, to review the facilities and the obstacles presented by the social and political circumstances of Arabia to the spread of the new religion. In the attempt I shall borrow largely from the admirable work of M. Caussin de Perceval, in which he has with incredible learning and labour, and much success, detailed the steps by which the independent and hostile fragments of Arabia became one great and irresistible nation.*

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* *Essai sur L'Histoire des Arabes avant L'Islamisme, Pendant L'Epoque de Mahomet, et jusqu'à la réduction de toutes les tribus sous la loi Musulmane. Par A. P. Caussin de Perceval, Professeur d'Arabe au Collége Royal de France. Trois Tomes.* Paris, 1847–8.

M. Caussin de Perceval has in these volumes traced the history of the Arabian tribes and States, from the earliest glimmerings of Mahometan tradition, to the period when the whole were united under the banner of Islam. Throwing together the multitudinous and often discrepant genealogies, and accounts of individuals and of tribes, he has collated the several steps of various lines, noting at what points they meet, and where the tradition of events disproves or corroborates the tradition of names. The result of his investigations is exhibited with great ingenuity and clearness, in fifteen tables or genealogical trees, in which the descent of the chief tribes and most famous personages of the Peninsula is traced up, with the approximate era of each generation, to the most remote period for which tradition furnishes authority. These tables add much to the value of the book, for the mind of the ordinary reader is bewildered with

Geographical outline of Arabia.

Before proceeding to the task it will be useful to note the outlines and chief geographical features of the peninsula.

The peninsula may be described as an irregular parallelogram.

Arabia is commonly described as a triangular continent, having a right angle at Bâb al Mandeb; but it is more natural and convenient to consider it as an irregular parallelogram approaching to rectangular, which, if we detach the province of Omân projecting towards Persia, it will be found to resemble. A line drawn down the Euphrates, from a point above the ancient Babylon, and skirting the southern shore of the Persian Gulph and the boundary of Omân till it meets the Indian Ocean, will give the eastern side of the figure: the corresponding parallel on the west runs from Suez, or from Al Arîsh on the Mediterranean, to the Straits of Bâb al Mandeb. Each line stretches over eighteen degrees of latitude, and extends for a length of thirteen or fourteen hundred miles. The northern side is formed by a line drawn from Suez in a north-easterly direction till it meets the Euphrates, a distance of about six hundred miles; and forms the ill-defined boundary contested by the roving tribes of Arabia and the sedentary inhabitants of Syria. The southern parallel is the shore washed by the Indian Ocean. The length of the parallelogram lies diagonally across the meridian; and it is broader at the south-western extremity than on the opposite side, where the Euphrates, by its western bend, narrows the Syrian confine.

Longitudinal range of mountains.

Along the western line washed by the Red Sea, runs a chain of lofty mountains. It takes its rise in Syria and, forming the high land to the east of the Dead Sea, sweeps south to Mount Sinai and thence to the Straits of Bâb al Mandeb, where it dips into the Indian Ocean, again to re-appear on the shores of Africa. The range follows closely the line of the coast, from whence the mariner sees its dismal and repulsive rocks of reddish sandstone and porphyry, at times pressing near enough to be laved by the waters

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the maze of collateral families and tribes crossing and re-crossing each other's path.

I am not aware that the information given in C. de Perceval's two first volumes is anywhere available to the English reader in a complete and digested form; and I have therefore deemed it the more necessary to give as much detail in the narrative as this object of the chapter would admit of.

of the Red Sea, at times receding so as to form a broad margin of low land. The latter is styled the Tehâma.

Tehâma.

From the centre of this great chain is thrown off at right angles a mountain range called the Jebel Ared, which traverses the peninsula, parallel with its northern and southern boundaries. It runs from Tâyif in the vicinity of Mecca, towards Derâyeh and the Persian Gulph, and thus divides Arabia into two equal halves. Another chain, the Jebel Shammâr, runs east and west between the Gulph of Akaba and the mouth of the Euphrates; and a third unites the eastern portions of both the latitudinal ranges. The space between these mountains is comprised in the district of Najd, and forms a vast expanse of lofty country, abutting upon the mountain chain of the Red Sea, and sloping downwards to the Persian Gulph.

Two latitudinal ranges.

Najd.

Between Najd and the Red Sea is situated the mountainous region of the Hejâz,* including both Medîna and Mecca. The main longitudinal range here lies far back from the coast, at a distance perhaps of a hundred miles, and is in some places of great elevation; but the interval is filled with lesser chains rising from the shore, one above another, with alternate vales or *Wâdies*, until the granite-crested peaks of the chief range overtop the whole. The traveller from the west who has toiled up the weary ascent, finds to his surprise that, instead of a similar declivity on the other side, he has only reached the level of the grand plateau or steppe of Central Arabia, which stretches away towards the east.

The *Hejâz*.

The southern half of the peninsula is divided into two parts. The western quarter comprises the hilly but fertile Yemen. Perennial streams here flow from the mountains to the sea, watering the rich corn-fields and plantations of coffee, and justifying the title of Yemen as the garden of Arabia. Northwards are Khaulân, Najrân, and other districts, which partake more or less of the same character. The eastern division, lying between these

Yemen.

Khaulân, Najrân, &c.

* That is "the barrier," as lying between Yemen and Syria; or the frontier between the northern and southern merchants. *C. de Perceval*, vol. i. p. 2; *Sprenger's Mohammed*, p. 14. Burton inclines to another meaning, viz., "the *colligated* by mountains," vol. ii. p. 165.

Omân.

countries and Omân, is almost unknown (if we except its lofty and precipitous coast), and is supposed to be entirely desert.

Arid and inhospitable character of the soil.

Although Arabia is not greatly inferior in extent to India, yet it does not possess a single navigable river; and, instead of a wide expanse of alluvial cultivation, it exhibits for the most part a barren and dreary waste of rock and sand. Most of the streams lose themselves in the sandy plains, and never reach the sea, excepting when swollen by heavy and continued rain. Thus the country is marked by frequent water courses, which, though generally dry, often indicate by stones and boulders scattered in their broad and sandy beds the violence and volume of the occasional floods.* Along such channels there is sometimes at a little depth a stratum or under current of water, breaking out here and there in wells, and supporting an extended strip of trees and vegetation. These are the Wâdies or Oases of the desert which, constrasting with the wild bleak wilderness around, charm the traveller with an unspeakable freshness and verdure.

The *Wâdies* and *Oases.*

Order proposed in the following chapter.

In tracing the tangled thread of the history of this great peninsula, it will tend to perspicuity if we follow first the fortunes of the Himyar dynasty in Yemen, then advert to the outlying kingdoms of Hîra and Ghassân, and finally sketch the position of the central tribes, and of the two cities Mecca and Medîna, in which the future interest of our story will mainly be concentrated.

SECTION I.

Yemen and the Himyarite Dynasty.

The history of Yemen, in consequence of inscriptions, ascends

In the first chapter I have referred to the national tradition and poetry of the Arabs, and have admitted that with respect to genealogical and phylarchical events, their reminiscences have peculiar

* From the absence of any English name for these channels Burton applies the Sicilian appellation *fiumara* to them. In India the word *Nallah*, and in the vicinity of the *Himalayas* the local term *Rao*, gives the same signification. In Arabia the common name is *masyal* or *masilah* (from *sayl*) *i.e.* place of a flood or torrent. See *Burton's Mecca and Medina*, vol. i. p. 368.

claims upon our belief.* In the case of the Himyar empire in the south of Arabia there is, besides these sources, ground for believing that national events were chronicled by inscriptions, and thence incorporated in the traditional accounts of the Arab historians. It is thus possible for the history of the Himyar dynasty to ascend far above that of the Abrahamic tribes, which was dependent solely on oral tradition.

higher than that of the rest of Arabia,

The reader has probably followed with interest and curiosity the successive discoveries of Himyar writing at Sanâ, Hisn al Ghorâb, Khariba, and Mâreb. These were ancient seats of Himyarite rule; and as we are assured that the nation was acquainted with letters and far advanced in civilization and opulence, it corresponds certainly with our natural expectation that we should find in the neighbourhood permanent memorials of ancient greatness, "graven in the rock with a pen of steel." Notwithstanding many learned and ingenious attempts to unravel these inscriptions no certain clue has yet been found. In a few words, indeed, resemblance may be traced to ancient names in the Himyar dynasty;† but the foundation is far from being broad enough to build any sure theory upon.

These inscriptions not now decypherable

Still there remains the indisputable fact that events of some description, and most likely the names of the ancient kings of Yemen, were thus recorded. It is also certain that, at the time of the Mahometan conquest, there were alive upon the spot inhabitants versed in the Himyar alphabet, and able to communicate the meaning of the inscriptions to the curious inquirer. Wherefore, although the knowledge of the Musnad character became rapidly extinct, and we nowhere read of any native history of Yemen,‡ it is yet highly probable that the early Mahometan writers had the ready means of decyphering the numerous inscriptions, and with the aid of local tradition of framing therefrom a chronicle of the names and of some of the acts of the kings of the Himyarite line.

but known to the early Mahometan historians and traditionists.

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* *Vide* above, chap. I., canons I. D, and III. E, pp. lv. & lxxxiii.

† See instances given by M. C. de Perceval, vol. i. pp. 90 & 111.

‡ Hamza mentions an ancient history of Yemen: but he means no doubt an ancient *Mahometan* History.

Confused and discrepant narrative compiled by Mahometan historians from such sources.

These sources of information must however at the best have been very imperfect. The materials presented to us by the Arab historians are so doubtful and discrepant that M. C. de Perceval, after extraordinary pains to reduce them to an uniform narrative, admits that they are involved in "a profound uncertainty."*

Cahtân 800 to 500 B.C.

The first of the Yemen dynasty is the great CAHTÂN.† To calculate the era at which he lived, we must note the number of generations between him and Dzu Nowâs, the last of the Himyar race. As adjusted by M. C. de Perceval, they amount to thirty-nine; which, at thirty-three years to a generation,‡ gives an interval of 1,287 years. Now the birth of Dzu Nowâs may be placed approximatively at 460 A.D.; so that the era of Cahtân would by this calculation be carried back to 827 B.C.

Calculation by the lines of Cahlân and Codhâa.

When, however, the descent is followed by another line, that of *Cahlân* the brother of Himyar, and also by the separate Himyarite stem of *Codhâa*, we find only from thirty-three to thirty-six gene-

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* Il règne une profonde incertitude sur l'histoire des Sabéens issus de Yectan, appelés Cahtanides par les Arabes. Des traditions vagues, des listes de rois qui ne concordent pas toutes entres elles et offrent des lacunes manifestes, des généalogies interrompues ou douteuses, tels sont les documents que les écrivains orientaux nou présentent. Avec d'aussi faibles éléments pour reconstituer une histoire, ou ne peut espérer de parvenir à la vérité. Peut être, au moins, n'est-il pas impossible d'attaindre a la vraisemblance. Je n'étends pas nes prétentions au delà de ce terme." Vol. i. p. 47. M. C. de Perceval does not pretend to give us from such doubtful materials *the truth*, but only a likely approximation thereto. He has fully realized these modest pretensions.

† The names which connect the succession, or are of leading importance, are given in capitals. The same course will be observed throughout, especially as regards the line of Mahomet's forefathers.

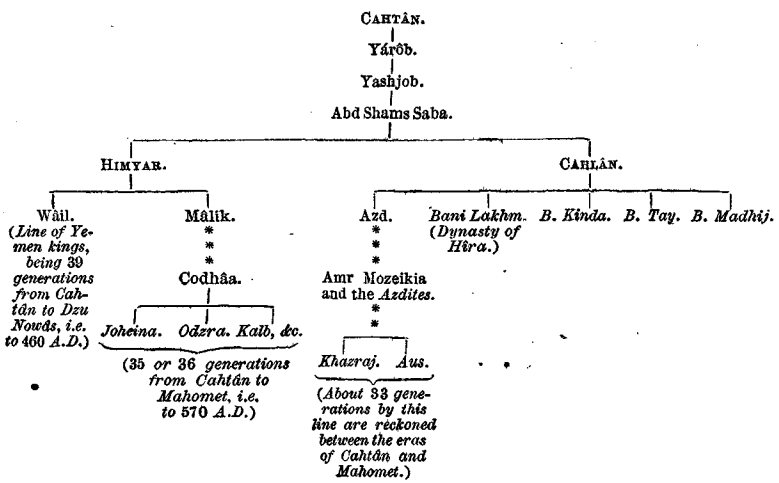
‡ M. C. de Perceval calculates thirty-three years to a generation, excepting where the exact period is known by historical fact or synchronism; but he admits that thirty years would, in general, suffice for an Arab generation. Vol. i. p. 248, note 1. Sprenger allows three generations to 100 years; he admits that "this is somewhat too high in ordinary cases," but has adopted the calculation, because some of Mahomet's progenitors were begotten at an advanced age, which has raised the average interval between the successions immediately preceding. *Asiatic Journal*, No. ccxxi. p. 349.

rations between Cahtân and Mahomet;* and this would bring closer to us the era of Cahtân by two or three centuries. In favour of the more modern era there are the uncertainties and discrepances in the Yemen succession: for it is possible that different and contemporaneous branches have been confused and represented as one continuous line.† This is the more likely from the yearning of the Mahometan writers after extreme antiquity, and their desire, by protracting the genealogies, to connect them with the Mosaical record.

Whichever line be adopted, we may, with tolerable confidence place the age of Cahtân between the years 800 B.C. and 500 B.C.

The identification of Cahtân with Joktân is an extravagant fiction.

* See Tables ii. and iii. vol. i. of *M. C. de Perceval.* The following curtailed abstract will explain the text more clearly:—


CAHTÂN.
Yârôb.
Yashjob.
Abd Shams Saba.
HIMYAR.
CAHLÂN.
Wâil. (Line of Yemen kings, being 39 generations from Cahtân to Dzu Nowâs, i.e. to 460 A.D.)
Mâlik.
Codhâa.
Joheina. Odzra. Kalb, &c.
(35 or 36 generations from Cahtân to Mahomet, i.e. to 570 A.D.)
Azd.
Amr Mozeikia and the Azdites.
Khazraj. Aus.
(About 33 generations by this line are reckoned between the eras of Cahtân and Mahomet.)
Bani Lakhm. (Dynasty of Hîra.)
B. Kinda.
B. Tay.
B. Madhij.

† M. C. de Perceval admits that from the imperfection of his materials he has frequently been obliged, by a reference to the genealogical lines of descent, to suppose lacunæ in the reigns, and *vice versa*. Thus, about the time of Abd Shams II. the sixteenth prince of the line, a gap has been discovered of several names in the royal line, as we learn by comparing it with the genealogical trees.

The lines of Cahlân and Codhâa were preserved *memoriter;* while the line of Himyar was *recorded* at least by inscriptions, and is likely therefore to be more complete.

It is this Cahtân whom Mahometan writers have identified with Joktân (Yectân), the sixth from Noah; but the identification is one of those extravagant fictions which the followers of Islam, in their zeal to accommodate Arab legend to Jewish scripture, have made in defiance of the most violent improbability, and the grossest anachronisms.*

Cahtân and his descendants.

Cahtân was succeeded by his son YÂRÔB, who expelled or destroyed the Adites, consolidated the empire of Yemen, and gave to his brothers *Omân* and *Hadhramaut* (the story is perhaps a myth) the government of the two countries thenceforward called by their names. Yârôb begot Yashjob; and Yashjob, Abd Shams Saba the Great.

Abd Shams builds Mârcb or Saba, and the famous dam.

ABD SHAMS SABA is said to have been the founder of the city of Mârcb or Saba, represented by classical writers, under the name of *Mariaba*, as the capital of the Sabeans, and situated upon a mountain. He also constructed or repaired the famous lake-embankment (*Sadd Mârcb*) in the vicinity of that city;—remains of it being traceable at the present day.†

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* The following passage from M. C. de Perceval is in complete accordance with this view:—"Il ne paraît point que, chez les premières il est existé aucune tradition nationale relative à la filiation de Cahtân. C'est depuis l'Islamisme seulement, quand les Arabes ont commencé à recueillir les souvenirs de leur histoire, *et à les comparer avec les témoignages de la Bible*, que la plupart des ecrivains orientaux ont identifié Cahtân avec Yectan, fils d'Héber." Vol. i. p. 39. In the next page, however, he adds that, though the identity of Joktan with Cahtân is not demonstrable, it may yet be plausibly entertained, but only on the supposition that an indefinite number of unknown generations intervened between Cahtân and the descendants named by tradition as his sons. But it appears to me not only that the identity cannot be proved, but that it cannot be maintained as even possible. It is utterly incredible that the name of Yectân, belonging to a period twenty centuries before our era, should have survived so many ages, and been reproduced in the eighth century B.C. as that of an historical personage, while all that intervenes is blank. The dictum of Mahometan tradition on the subject is plainly of no more value than that of any speculator or scriptural harmonist of the present day. It is no better than that of the Medîna party, who tried to prove that Cahtân was a descendant of Ishmael, and therefore had no connection with Yectân. *Kâtib al Wâckidi*, p. 262½; *M. C. de Perceval*, vol. i. p. 39.

† Others attribute its construction to the Adites, (*M. C. de Perceval*, vol. i. pp. 16-53) in which case Abd Shams may only have repaired it. In

Among the sons of Abd Shams Saba are the two famous patriarchs, HIMYAR and CAHLÂN, the sires (as tradition has it) of the whole Arab progeny. Their birth, according to the variety of opinion above expressed, occurred from 400 to 700 B.C. The pure races from this descent are termed *Mutáriba;* those mixed with supposed Ishmaelite blood, *Mustáriba.**

Himyar and *Cahlân*, 700 to 400 B.C.

Mutáriba and *Mustáriba.*

The children of Himyar are marked by their comparatively settled habits. They lived chiefly in cities, and acquired the civilized manners and tastes of an urban life. But the descendants of Cahlân, scorning the restrictions of place and the self-imposed wants of a sedentary residence, betook themselves to the free and wandering occupations of the Bedouin.

The children of Himyar *urban*, those of Cahlân *nomad* in their habits.

A different speech distinguished the two races. The *Himyarite* was spoken in the towns of Yemen, and was early provided with an alphabet. The *Arabic* of the Cahlânite tribes (acquired by their intermixture with the Abrahamic tribes of the north) did not possess the advantage of writing, apparently, till near the time of Mahomet.† The Bedouins alone cultivated poetry, and that only in the Arabic language. We meet with no tradition mentioning a single couplet composed in the Himyar tongue.‡

Himyarite and *Arabic* languages.

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dealing with such remote facts, we cannot do more than conjecture. For an account of the ruins see the interesting *Relation d'un voyage a Mâreb (Sana) dans l'Arabie méridional, entrepris en* 1843, *par M. Arnaud; Journal Asiatique, Fevr. Mars* 1845; and the remarks of *M. Fresnel, Ibid.* September and October, 1845. The great dam is an hour's distance from Mâreb, p. 242.

* See *Weil's Mohammed*, p. 2; and *M. C. de Perceval*, vol. i. p. 7, where the third, or *aboriginal* class given by the Arabs, viz. *Ariba*, is noted as consisting of indigenous tribes, such as the Amâlica, Ádites, Thamûd, Jadîs, Tasm;—who, it is held, became extinct, but more likely merged into the more powerful *Mutáriba* and *Mustáriba* tribes. The three terms are only different forms of the same word عرب. Yárôb, the name of Cahtân's son, is from the same root. The Arabs may either be really called after an historical personage so named; or, which is likelier, the character and name may be mythological, symbolizing the received opinion of the descent of the various Arab tribes from a common ancestor, who was thence styled by them Yárôb.

† See above, note 2, p. viii, chap. i.

‡ The Himyarite was probably the indigenous tongue of all the races descended from Cahtân; but in the case of the tribes migrating northwards,

The *Tobbas.* From Himyar, fifteen or twenty reigns, vaguely and dimly described, and some even of doubtful existence, may be passed over.* We then come to that portion of the Himyarite line known as the illustrious dynasty of the TOBBAS,† and enter on a period

it probably became assimilated with the Abrahamic Arabic from intercourse with the Abrahamic tribes. There are a variety of traditions regarding the prevalence of the two languages in Yemen. *Cnf. M. C. de Perceval*, vol. i. pp. 8, 50, 56, 79. The Mahometan theory, that all the aborigines (*Ariba*) spoke Arabic, and that *Yárôb* introduced it into Yemen, are evidently grounded on the etymological meaning of the words. A later king is said to have introduced the Himyar tongue into Yemen "*upon* the Arabic," ادخل اللغة الحميريه على اللغة العربيه —as if the Arabic had been the vernacular. But the expression may refer to the court language of Mâreb, which perhaps repeatedly changed at various times.

The fortuitous discovery of Himyar inscriptions at various places in a character hitherto unknown, and the fortunate recognition of an Arab MS. on the Himyar alphabet, give hopes that something may hereafter be deciphered from such monuments; but up to the present time little more has been identified than a few names, and those uncertainly. The lucubrations of Mr. Forster on this subject are ingenious but fanciful.

The usual mode of writing is from right to left; but sometimes the *boustrophedon* style is used. The letters are all separate, and the words disjoined by a vertical bar. *Journal Asiatique*, December 1838, and September and October, 1845; *M. C. de Perceval*, vol. i. p. 79. The Mahometans do not appear to have known much of the language: some saying that the writing was from left to right; some that the letters were disjoined, others connected. It is possible that there may have been a variety of styles; but the Mahometans are not remarkable for great exactness in such relations.

* To illustrate the absurdity of the fictions which abound in the history of this line, it may be mentioned that the Arab writers have invented a story, in which a Persian king Menût Shahr, Shammir the grand-son of Himyar, and Moses, are all three made to appear on the same stage! "Le synchronisme présenté par quelques historiens entre Chammir, Moïse, et un roi de Perse, Menoutchehr, ne mérite aucune attention. C'est une fausse conjecture, qui prend sa source dans l'idée très exagérée que se font les Arabes de l'antiquité des souverains du Yaman, dont on a conservé les noms." *M. C. de Perceval*, vol. i. p. 56.

† The origin of the name is doubtful. Some apply it to all Harith's successors; others to those of them only who ruled over the *entire* empire of Yemen, and did not divide its sovereignty with others. *M. C. de Perceval*, vol. i. p. 64. Their royal residences were successively Mâreb or Saba, Tzafâr, and Sana. Between the second and third centuries there were three renowned "Tobbas," known by that name *par excellence*.

where historical probability rests upon progressively improving grounds.*

HARITH AL RAISH, or AL FILSUF "the philosopher," supposed to have flourished about a century before Christ, is termed the first of the Tobbas. He re-invigorated the empire, and restored to his single sceptre several kingdoms which had fallen under princes of the Cahlân stock.

Harith, "the philosopher," born 150 B.C.

His successor was ESSAB *Dzu-l-Carnain*, or "the Horned." The surname is that which the Arabs accord to Alexander the Great; it is connected in the Coran with some strange legends, especially with the construction in the north of the prodigious rampart of *Yajûj* and *Majûj*.† The marvel-loving historians of Arabia have not been slow to follow up the clue. Some have identified Essâb at once as the hero of the Coran, and as the great Alexander; while others hold that he was a monarch contemporary with Abraham.‡

Essab, "the horned," identified with Alexander the Great.

The third from Essâb, styled by the foreign name of AFRICUS or AFRIKÎN, flourished probably about half a century before our era. The name, as usual, has suggested a variety of wild stories. Some allege that he located in Africa the Amalekites who escaped

Africus, 50 B.C.

* M. C. de Perceval thinks that the Yemen empire may have become known by the title of *Himyar* from the date of this re-union. The first mention of it in classical authors under that appellation is by Strabo, in describing the expedition of Ælius Gallus. M. C. de Perceval finds it difficult otherwise to account for the previous silence. But it would be still more difficult to believe that the name of so remote an ancestor as Himyar should have been then *revived*, and after the abeyance of so many centuries adopted as the distinguishing title of the kingdom. I would attribute the silence rather to the ignorance of so distant a kingdom.

† *Coran*, xviii. 85, *et. seq.* This fabulous wall has been identified with fortifications near the Caspian Sea made, as they say, by Alexander, and repaired by Yezdegird II. *C. de Perceval*, vol. i. p. 66. Whatever Alexander may have done to stop the inroads of the barbarians, the Arab legend is too wild to be seriously considered. Possibly it originated in some grand construction or work by Alexander, a magnified account of which reached the Arabs, and naturally in their hands would grow apace.

‡ Yet the *ancestor* of one of these parties was but just now represented as contemporary with the remote *descendant* of the other: *i.e.* Shammir, the thirteenth or fourteenth in ascent from Essâb, as contemporary with Moses! Such is Mahometan criticism and chronology.

from Joshua, and who there grew up into the Berber nation; others, that his exploits *against* the Berbers procured him the distinctive title. The reigning prince of his day in Africa was Jirjir, or Gregory*—a strange contemporary indeed for Joshua!

Dzu-al-Adzâr identified by C. de Perceval with *Ilasare* of the Roman expedition.

Africus was followed by his brother DZU-L-ADZÂR, to whose reign attach a tissue of imbecile legends. Caycaus king of Persia, having attacked him, was taken prisoner; but was subsequently liberated by the famous Rustam, and returned to his kingdom, after marrying the daughter of Dzu-l-Adzâr.† M. C. de Perceval ingeniously surmises that these facts bear traces of the Roman, rather than of a Persian, invasion; for it was somewhere about this period that Ælius Gallus, after having taken *Negranes* or *Negra* (Najrân), besieged and was repulsed from *Marsyaba* (*Muriaba* or Mâreb), a city belonging to the Yemenites,‡ who were then governed by *Ilasare*. The Chief, Ilasare, he recognizes

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* M. C. de Perceval is of opinion that the Mahometan writers have here confounded their idea of some ancient African Prince with Gregory the Patrician, who commanded in Africa when invaded by Othmân. He well adds; "On voit là un exemple de peu de scrupule avec lequel l'ignorance de quelques écrivains orientaux rapproche les temps les plus éloignés:" vol. i. p. 68.

He has also an ingenious theory that Africus may have been employed by Cæsar in the war against Juba, and thence gained his *African* name. In the battle of Actium, the Arabs of Yemen are said to have fought for Antony, and to have fled with Cleopatra.

Omnis Arabs, omnes vertebant terga Sabæi. *Æneid*, viii. 706.

Is it not more likely that this Africus made hostile incursions from Yemen into the Roman dependencies in Africa: and that these may have been at least one of the causes of the Roman expedition of Ælius Gallus, which followed shortly after?

† M. C. de Perceval traces the legend to a poetical fiction in Ferdûsi. "Si l'on en recherche l'origine, on s'aperçoit, qu'une vague tradition, ou peut-être une pure fiction présentée sous des formes indécises par le poëte Firdauci, qui florissait trois siècles après l'hégire, a été arbitrairement arrangée par des écrivains postérieurs sous les traits précis d'un fait historique. Firdauci avait chanté une expédition de Caycaous contre le roi de Hâmâwerân, pays inconnu, fantantisque, dont on a fait l'Arabie heureuse. Le poëte n'avait pas nommé ce roi: on a imaginé que c'était Dhou-l-Adhâr." Vol. i. p. 72. He then shows that the Mahometan historians are utterly ignorant of the real history of Persia at the period supposed.

‡ In the original Ῥαμανίτων; but conjectured by M. Fresnel, with some likelihood, to be a mistake for Ἰαμανίτων.

in the name of Dzu-l-Adzâr. The title, however, of this prince's son and successor, ALEISHRA or LEISHRA, has a more close resemblance to that of Strabo's Yemenite Governor. His era also is more appropriate; for according to C. de Perceval's genealogical table, Aleishra (who was also called SHURAHBIL, and YAHSAB) was born 68 B.C., or forty-four years before the Roman inroad; so that he could hardly have failed to take a part in the Arab defence.

Conjecture that it may rather have been his son *Aleishra*, 668 B.C.

It will not escape observation that the Arab histories contain no farther clue to this memorable incursion of the Romans; yet it was a circumstance, which from its unprecedented novelty, from the lasting marks of devastation, and from the glory acquired in the repulse, was likely above all other events to have lodged itself in the national mind and tradition. Foolish and unmeaning stories are, after a lapse of two thousand years, told with all freshness of detail and circumstance; while this, which is perhaps the most salient and striking incident in the history of Arabia, and which occurred within five or six centuries of the Moslem era, is unnoticed and unknown!

Strange oblivion of the Arabs as to the Roman expedition.

The grand-daughter of Aleishra, the famous Queen BALKÎS, who must have flourished during the first century of the Christian era, furnishes a still more remarkable example of the illusory nature of remote Mahometan tradition. She is held to have been no less a personage than the Queen of Sheba, who visited Solomon the son of David a thousand years before! Her mother is said to have been one of the genii. It would be unprofitable to enter into a detail of the extravagant legends related of this personage, some of which have received countenance even in the Coran. It is remarkable that Mahomet there represents her people as addicted to the worship of the Sun.*

Balkîs, 1st century, A.D.

Confounded by tradition with the Queen of Sheba.

* See *Sura*, xxvii. 24, *et. seq.* She is also styled by tradition Balcama or Yalcama; but no name is given in the Coran, where she is simply described as the Queen of Saba. "Mais les interprètes, ne trouvant pas dans la liste des souverains du Yaman, conservée par la tradition, de reine plus ancienne que Belkîs, n'ont pas hésité à déclarer que c'était elle qui avait fait le voyage de Jérusalem. Leur sentiment a été pieusement adopté par les chroniquers, et cette opinion, accréditée par la superstition et l'ignorance, est probablement, la cause principale qui a empêché les historiens de classer les rois du Yaman suivant un ordre chronologique raisonnable." *M. C. de Perceval*, vol. i. p. 77. I would hardly call this "the principal cause" for

Tobba al Akran, beginning of second century, A.D.

Two more successions bring us to TOBBA AL AKRAN, in whose reign occurred the celebrated exodus of the *Azdites*, a people descended from the stock of Cahlân. This tribe, under the command of two brothers, Omrân and AMR MOZAIKIA,* became independent of the Himyarites, and made themselves masters of Mâreb. Omrân died, but not (so goes the legend) without giving his brother intimation of the dire calamity impending over the land. The wife of Amr Mozaikia followed up the monition by an ominous vision. She bade him go to the embankment of the lake formed by the *Sadd Mareb* near the city; and, if he should see a rat scraping the mound and detaching from it huge stones, she prognosticated a speedy and inevitable ruin. He went and saw the fatal sign. Thus warned, Amr Mozaikia made immediate preparations to emigrate, and set out northward with the greater portion of his tribe. Shortly after their departure, the embankment rent asunder, and the flood, escaping with devastating fury, spread destruction in its wake.

Amr Mozaikia.

Migration of the Azdites; and destruction of the Lake of Mareb, 120 A.D.

True cause of the exodus of the Azdites.

At the close of the preceding chapter, I have shown grounds for the belief that a cause of far greater depth and extent than the destruction of this dam had long been at work paving the way for emigration. The drying up of the Yemen commerce, and stoppage of the carrying trade, had disorganized society and led perhaps to the rebellion of the Azdites and their seizure of Mâreb. The threatened breach of the dam accelerated the crisis, and gave the last impulse to an over-burdened and necessitous population, already eager to go forth in quest of a livelihood to some less

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the departure of the Mahometan historians from a reasonable chronology. Their appetite for ancient dates had a far more important source. They longed to complete the chain of legendary tradition by connecting Adnân with Ishmael, and identifying Cahtân with the Joktan of the Mosaical record. The absurd antiquity thus imparted to modern names attached likewise to this Queen, and they were then free to deal with her as they pleased. The motive of identifying Belkis with the Queen of Sheba, is not of itself a sufficient one for the unsettlement of the chronology.

* He is called *Mozaikia*, they say, from daily "rending" the garment of yesterday, which he always replaced by a new one; but more likely from "rending" the Azdites from their ancient settlements. But who can tell the thousand incidents from which a soubriquet may arise?

straitened country. The emigration took place about the year 120 A.D.*

Yemen, thus relieved of part of its surplus inhabitants, regained rapidly its prosperity, notwithstanding the ravages of the flood. Tobba al Akran recovered his authority. He is renowned as a great warrior; and is said to have carried his arms to the borders of China.

Yemen soon recovers its prosperity.

The fourth in succession from Tobba al Akran, was TIBBÂN ASAD, ABU KARIB, who flourished about the beginning of the third century of our era, one of the most illustrious of the Tobbas.† His name is connected with Yathreb or Medîna. Being on an expedition to Persia, he left his son under the care of the people of Medîna. They murdered the boy; and in revenge Tibban Asad besieged their city and threatened it with destruction. But two Jewish doctors of the Beni Coreitza, then resident at Medîna, having brought him over to Judaism, diverted him from his designs by foretelling (as is pretended) that Yathreb would become the refuge of a great prophet to arise in Arabia. At their instance he visited and enriched the Kaaba as the shrine of Abraham, and was the first to adorn it with a covering of cloth. On returning to Yemen, he introduced there the Jewish religion.

Tibbân Asad, Abu Karib; beginning of third century, A.D.

His attack upon Medîna, and conversion to Judaism.

* It is important to fix the chronology of this salient point in the history of Arabia. The Mahometan writers agree in placing the event between our Saviour and Mahomet, some six, some four centuries, prior to Islam. The Azdite genealogies, (such as those of the Aws and Khazraj of Medîna,) place the birth of Amr Mozaikia about five centuries before that of Mahomet. These considerations combine to fix the emigration somewhere about 120 A.D. M. C. de Perceval thinks that the great prosperity ascribed to Mâreb by Strabo and Pliny argues that the calamity of the dam was posterior to the Christian era. I would draw the same conclusion rather from the fact that the altered stream of commerce would probably not have worked out its baneful effect upon the Himyarite State, till after the Christian era.

M. de Sacy conjectures, that the insecurity of the dam was not the real cause of the emigration; but was invented by the later Azdites, to cover some less honourable cause; perhaps fear of defeat from Tobba al Akran. But the view given in the text appears more natural.

† The author of the *Periplus* mentions *Caribael* as reigning at Zhafâr. This is supposed to have been about 200 A.D. Caribael may either have been this Abu *Cariba-al* Himyarî, or his father Calay *Cariba-al* Himyarî. *C. de Perceval*, vol. i. p. 90.

The idolaters contested the change, and appealed to the trial by fire; but they were miraculously confuted by the two Jewish doctors.* Judaism did not, however, gain any important extension in Yemen till the reign of Dzu Nowâs, and even to the era of Islam it had to contend against idolatry.

Circumstances tending to confuse the history of this attack.

The details of the Medîna expedition are much complicated by two circumstances. For the same adventure is attributed by various writers to Hassân Tobba the Less, who flourished about a century after Tibbân Asad; while, in many important particulars, it is confounded with another attack made upon Medîna by a sovereign of Yemen, at least three centuries after Tibbân Asad, the memory of which was yet recent in the time of Mahomet.†

Rabia.

After Tibbân Asad there is a break in the Himyar line; for a prince called RABIA, of the *Cahlânite* stock and *Bani Lakhm* tribe,‡

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* The tale of the Jewish doctors is mingled with marvels and anticipations of Mahomet. The whole story is thus of such feeble authority that no safe inference as to the prevalence of Judaism can be built (as Lieut. Burton seems inclined to do) upon it. *Pilgrimage to Medîna and Mecca*, vol. iii. pp. 160 and 336.

† The two expeditions are so confounded that many of the names belonging to the modern attack (as that of Ohaiha, who lived in the sixth century,) are introduced by a patent anachronism into the ancient adventure. The later expedition will be farther considered when we come to Medîna.

With reference to the ancient attack, the fact of the Aws and Khazraj being then at Yathreb (if it be a *bonâ fide* fact and not borrowed from the modern expedition,) would argue for its having occurred under the reign of Hassân Tobba the Less, and not under that of Tibbân Asad Abu Carib: because those tribes did not settle at Medîna till about 300 A.D., or a century after the reign of the latter prince. On the other hand, the introduction of Judaism into Yemen, if really (as represented) a result of the present expedition, would favour the earlier date; because there is reason for thinking that Judaism was known there before 300 A.D.

The whole story is given at length by *Hishâmi*, pp. 7 *et. seq.*, and is common among the Mahometan historians. The reader will not fail to observe the ridiculous "foreshadowing" of Mahomet's flight to Medîna. See *Journal Asiatique*, November, 1838, p. 444. Two valuable papers by M. Perron, in that and the previous number, may be consulted by the student, who wishes to see in greater detail the accounts of the Mahometan historians on the subject. See also *M. C. de Perceval*, vol. i. p. 91, and vol. ii. p. 647.

‡ See Table at p. cxlix.

succeeded to him. The following characteristic legend of Rabia is cherished by Mahometan writers. He was affrighted by a portentous dream; the diviners were summoned; but, as in the case of Nebuchadnezzar, they could not tell the interpretation unless the dream were made known to them. At last two diviners were introduced, each of whom separately narrated to the king both the dream and its signification:—*Thou sawest a flame burst forth from the darkness; it fell upon the land of Tihâma, and devoured every living thing.* The flame prefigured the Abyssinians, who would overrun Yemen from Aden to Najrân, and rule for above seventy years. After that, proceeded the diviners, these invaders would be overthrown, and would be succeeded by an inspired prophet of the Coreishite stock, to whose rule all Arabia would submit, and whose law would prevail until the day of judgment. The prince, terrified by the threat of Abyssinian invasion, immediately sent off his family and adherents to Irâc. This emigration took place early in the third century. It will be seen below that from Adi, one of Rabia's sons, sprang the *Lakhmite* dynasty of Hîra.*

His dream and the Lakhmite emigration to Irac, 205 A.D.

On Rabia's death the kingdom reverted to the son of Tibbân Asad, HASSÂN TOBBA, during whose reign, in the first half of the third century, a farther emigration took place from Yemen. The *Bani Tay*, a great Cahlânite family, isolated since the departure of their neighbours the Azdites, and like them suffering from the effects of the great commercial change, moved northwards and finally took up their position in the mountains of Ajâ and Salmâ to the north of Najd and the Hejâz.

Hassân Tobba, 236-250, A.D.

Emigration northwards of the *Bani Tay*.

After four successions we find, towards the close of the third century, a Christian king of Yemen called ABD KELÂL. He is said to have been converted by a Syrian stranger whom the Himyarites, enraged at their prince's defection, murdered. This is the first intimation we meet with of Christianity in Yemen; and,

Abd Kelâl, a Christian king, 275 A.D.

* See *Hishâmi*, p. 5, and *M. C. de Perceval*, vol. i. pp. 96-100. The latter, with reason, regards the prophecy to be a fabrication, intended to cover a less reputable cause of emigration, perhaps fear of the arms of the Himyarite monarch against whom, in the capacity of vassal, Rabia had rebelled. The Mahometan anxiety to discover or to fabricate *foreshadowings* of the coming Prophet, may have worked together with this motive.

as it is attributed to a foreign source, there would appear to have been no indigenous or hereditary profession of it there.

Hassân Tobba the less 300 A.D.

The next prince was HASSÂN TOBBA, AL ASGHAR, or *the Less*, styled *the last of the Tobbas*, to whom is attributed by Hishâmi and other writers, the attack upon Medîna just mentioned. He reigned about 300 A.D.; and Arab historians speak of a treaty concluded between him and the Meccan tribe. From this time forward we have frequent proof that the central tribes of the peninsula acknowledged a general allegiance to the Himyar kingdom. The relation was ever and anon interrupted by hostilities, and as often after short intervals renewed.

Dependence of the central tribes on the Himyar kings.

The tolerant reign of Marthad, 330 A.D.

Hassân was succeeded by MARTHAD son of Abd Kelâl, who is famed for wise and moderate views upon religious toleration. He used to say, "*I reign over men's bodies, not over their opinions. I exact from my subjects obedience to my government; as to their religious doctrine, the Judge of that is the Great Creator.*" During this exemplary reign we learn from ecclesiastical history that a Grecian embassage appeared in the capital of Yemen. It was sent by the Emperor Constantius to strengthen his alliance with the Himyarites, and to attract them to Christianity. At its head was the Indian Bishop Theophilus, who presented to "the prince of the Sabæans or Homerites," among other royal gifts, "two hundred horses of the purest breed of Cappadocia," and sought permission to erect churches for the subjects of the Roman emperor attracted to Yemen by merchandize, and for the natives who might wish to embrace the religion of Jesus. So far the mission was successful: three churches were built, one at Tzafâr, the royal residence; another at Aden, the point of traffic with India; a third at the chief maritime town on the Persian Gulph. Theophilus flattered himself that he had even converted the Himyarite monarch; but for conversion he probably mistook what was no more than a latitudinarian and tolerant philosophy.* It is certain that Arab history makes no mention either of this mission or of its effects.

The mission sent by Constantius.

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* *M. C. de Perceval*, p. 112; *Philistorgius, Hist. Eccles.* l. iii. chap. 4-6. Gibbon gives a brief account of this embassy, *Decline and Fall*, chap. xx. Philostorgius wrote his work in the first half of the fifth century.

State of Yemen as described by the embassy

Philostorgius informs us that the inhabitants of Yemen were at that time partly Jewish, partly Pagan. The Pagans, though far the most numerous, practised the rite of circumcision, and like the Jews on the eighth day. They also sacrificed to the sun and the moon, and to other divinities several of whose names we learn from Arab writers.

Disorganization in Yemen, 350 A.D.

After the death of Marthad, the Himyarite empire began to decline, and its subordinate rulers to throw off the yoke of dependence. The disorganization arose, perhaps, from unsuccessful war with the Abyssinian kingdom; for, about the middle of the fourth century the sovereign of Axum (between the Red Sea and the Nile) joined to his other titles that of *King of the Himyarites.**

Period of uncertainty.

To such troubles may be attributed the brevity and frequent uncertainty of the history of Yemen for a long series of years. The Himyar dynasty, however, still maintained its supremacy over the tribes of Najd and the Hedjâz; and about the middle of the fifth century gave them a king or viceroy, called Hojr Akil al Morâr of the *Kinda* tribe.†

A viceroy given to the central tribes, 450 A.D.

Dzu Shenâtir assassinated by Dzu Nowâs.

Towards the end of the fifth century the throne was usurped by the dissolute Dzu Shenâtir. He was abhorred of the people for his flagitious deeds, which he carried to such an extreme as to dishonour the youths even of the most noble families. One of them, rather than submit to his indignities, put an end to the tyrant's life. This youth, called Dzu Nowas, belonged to the royal stock, and was unanimously called to the throne. During his reign there were several encounters between the Kinda viceroy supported by Yemen troops, and the tribes of Central Arabia. The latter were repeatedly victorious, but always returned again after a time to their allegiance. The Himyar dynasty thus con-

490-525 A.D.

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* *M. C. de Perceval*, vol. i. p. 114. The Greek inscription at Axum, discovered by Salt, gives these titles as appertaining to the Axumite monarch Aeïzanas. See the description of Axum, between Meröe and the sea-port Adule, in *Heeren's Res. Africa*, vol. i. p. 460, &c.

† The connexion is also marked by the fact that Sabbah, who reigned over Yemen 440 to 460 A.D. made a tour of Najd, to assure himself of the submission of the tribes of Central Arabia. *M. C. de Perceval*, vol. i. p. 116.

tinued to maintain its Arabian influence, until it was finally overthrown by the Abyssinians, when the feudal authority over the Arabs passed into the hands of the Prince of Hîra the vassal of Persia.

Dzu Nowâs attacks Najrân, and massacres the Christians, 523 A.D.

Dzu Nowâs was a votary of Judaism, which he is said to have embraced on a visit to Medîna.* This creed he supported with an intolerant and proselytizing adherence, which at last proved fatal to his kingdom. His bigotry was aroused by the prevalence and success of Christianity in the neighbouring province of Najrân; and he invaded it with a large army. The Christians offered a strenuous resistance, but yielded at length to the treacherous promise that no ill would be done to them. They were offered the choice of Judaism or death, and those who remained constant to the faith of Jesus were cruelly massacred. Deep trenches were dug, and filled with combustible materials; the pile was lighted, and the Christian martyrs cast headlong into the flame. The number thus miserably burned, or slain by the sword, is stated at no less than twenty thousand.†

The court of Constantinople stirs up the Prince of Abyssinia to avenge the tyranny of Dzu Nowâs.

However much the account of this melancholy carnage may have been exaggerated, there can be no doubt of the cruel and bloody character of the tyrant's administration in Najrân. News of the proceedings reached the emperor Justin I. through his ambassador at Hîra, to which court Dzu Nowâs had exultingly communicated tidings of his triumph.‡ One of the intended victims, Dous dzu

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* Hamza states that having visited Medîna, one half of the inhabitants of which were then Jews, Dzu Nowâs was so well pleased with their religion, that he embraced it. But, as M. C. de Perceval shows (vol. i. p. 122), it is much more likely that he became a Jew through the influence of the powerful and long established party in Yemen; and that he visited Medîna in order to succour the Jews against the oppressive attacks of the Aws and Khazraj. This agrees with the history of Medîna, and is in excellent keeping with the sectarian bias which led Dzu Nowâs to the attack of Najrân.

† *M. C. de Perceval,* vol. i. p. 129; *Hishâmi,* p. 14. The details are briefly given by Gibbon at the close of the xlii. chap. of the *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire:* and the subject is alluded to in the Coran, Sura lxxxv. v. 4, *et. seq.*, where those who perished in the trenches are styled As-hâb al Okhdûd.

‡ We gather this from the Greek historians. The Arabs only tell us of the suppliant Dous, whom the Greeks do not mention.

Tholabân, also escaped to Constantinople and, holding up a half-burnt Gospel, invoked in the name of outraged Christendom retribution upon the oppressor. The emperor was moved, and indited a despatch to the Najâshi or prince of the Abyssinians, desiring him to take vengeance upon the barbarous Himyarite. Immediately an armament was set on foot, and in a short time seventy thousand warriors, embarked in thirteen hundred merchant ships or transports,* crossed the narrow gulph which separates Yemen from Adulis. Dzu Nowâs was defeated; in despair he urged his horse into the sea, and expiated in the waves the inhumanities of his career. The Abyssinian victory occurred in 525 A.D.†

Victory of the Abyssinians, and death of Dzu Nowâs, 525 A.D.

The African army was commanded by Aryât, who reigned over Yemen as the viceroy of the Najâshi. But another Abyssinian chief named ABRAHA, who had accompanied the expedition, rebelled against Aryât and, having slain him in single combat, succeeded to the government. Abraha was a zealous Christian; and the efforts of Gregentius, a bishop deputed by the Patriarch of Alexandria to follow up the secular by a spiritual conquest, were seconded by him with more energy than judgment. He built at Sanâ a magnificent cathedral, and professed himself desirous that the worship of the Arab tribes should be diverted from Mecca to this new shrine. With this object it is alleged

Abraha, the Abyssinian viceroy attacks Mecca, and perishes in the expedition 570 A.D.

* The number of the force as given by the Arabs is probably exaggerated. An ecclesiastical work mentions that 600 Roman merchantmen were employed on the occasion by the Abyssinian monarch: he had also 700 light transports. The Greek authorities state that the emperor wrote to the Patriarch of Alexandria to stir up the Negus or King of Axume, to avenge the massacre of his fellow Christians in Najrân. This king is styled among the Arabs by the hereditary title of Najâshi, which is another form of Negus. The then prince is called by the Grecians Elesbaas (Atzbeha), and by the Ethiopians Caleb or Amda. The former was probably his baptismal name. *M. C. de Perceval*, vol. i. p. 131.

† Some Syrian and Greek writers place both the Abyssinian conquest and the massacre in Najrân, within the year 523 A.D. In Assemani (vol. i. p. 364), is given a letter of the Bishop Simeon, stating that tidings of the conquest of Najrân reached the king of Hîra early in Feb. 524: it therefore occurred about the close of 523. Allowing time for the intervening events and preparations, the defeat of Dzu Nowâs cannot well be placed earlier than the beginning of 525 A.D. *M. C. de Perceval*, p. 133.

that he published a general order, and sent missionaries throughout Arabia, calling upon the Arabs to make the pilgrimage. The Meccans were displeased, and killed one of his emissaries; a Coreishite had even the audacity to defile the precincts of the Christian edifice. Enraged at such opposition and contempt, Abraha set out with an army to destroy the Kaaba; but he perished in the expedition. This attack, famous in the annals of Mecca as that *of the Elephant*, occurred in the year 570 A.D., within two months of the birth of Mahomet.

Aided by Persia, Mâdicarib overthrows the Abyssinians, 575 A.D.

The history of Yemen is now detached from the rest of Arabia. The Abyssinian rule was distasteful to the natives; and a Himyarite of the royal house, named Saif, whether impelled by the tyranny of the invaders, or by the hope of succeeding to the throne of his ancestors, sought for foreign aid first fruitlessly at the court of Constantinople, and then at that of the Persian king. From the latter, Mádicarib, son of the original suppliant, at last obtained an order to empty the prisons of the convicts fit for war. With an army drawn from this source, he embarked in eight ships, six of which safely reached the port of Aden. The Persian and Abyssinian armies met, and Wahraz the convict chief decided the struggle by killing Masrûk the Abyssinian viceroy. This happened about 575 A.D.*

Embassies from the tribes on the revival of the Himyar dynasty.

In the person of MADIKARIB, who was installed as the ruler of Yemen and the vassal of the Persian king, the Himyarite dynasty seemed again to re-appear. The Arab tribes sent deputations to congratulate him on the auspicious occasion, and among them is named Abd al Mottalib, the grandfather of Mahomet. But the story is accompanied by so many extravagant anticipations of the Prophet as to involve it altogether in suspicion.†

The Abyssinians finally expelled, A.D. 597.

There is reason to believe that the Abyssinians still maintained a struggle with the resuscitated Himyar government, and were

* The account of these events is given in detail by *Hishami*, p. 19, *et. seq.* *M. C. de Perceval*, vol. i. p. 146, *et seq.*

† Weil objects to the story upon chronological grounds; but his objections appear to be removed by the explanation of M. C. de Perceval, who makes the Abyssinians to receive the *first* check and overthrow in 575, but not to be *finally* expelled till 597. *Weil's Mohammed*, p. 8, note 1.

not finally subdued till the year 597. Then, after having maintained themselves for seventy-two years, they were effectually crushed by a second Persian army under the same Wahraz, and Yemen sank into a simple dependency of Persia. Badzân, one of the early successors of Wahraz, is said to have given in his adhesion to Islam while Mahomet was yet alive.

SECTION II.

The Kingdom of Hîra.

Arab origin of the kingdoms of Hîra and Ghassân.

I will now briefly trace the original history of the two kingdoms of Hîra and Ghassân in the north of Arabia, both of which were Arab in their origin, and exercised a constant and important influence upon the Peninsula.

The *Azdites* emigrate to the north and east. 120 A.D.

These States took their rise, subsequent to the Christian era, in the migratory impulse which led so many tribes to move northward from Yemen, and transplant themselves from the shores of the Indian sea to those of the Mediterranean, and along the banks of the Euphrates. The emigration of the AZDITES, an extensive tribe descended from Cahlân the brother of Himyar, has been already fixed as having occurred about the year 120 A.D.* One portion moved east towards Omân; the other passed northward through Najrân and the Hedjâz to Syria, but left many offshoots by the way, some of which commingled with the Bedouin tribes of Najd, while others settled at Mecca and Medîna and played a prominent part in the subsequent history of those cities.

The *Codhâite* race emigrates to the vicinity of Mecca;

The CODHÂITE tribe, descended from Himyar,† inhabited Mahra a country to the east of Aden, where they were ruled by their own kings. At a period probably anterior to the movement of

* See above, p. clvii.

† See the Table at p. cxlix. Some hold that Codhâa was descended from Máadd the Ishmaelite ancestor of Mahomet, and that his posterity settled in Yemen and became confounded with that of Himyar. But the legend is unlikely, and probably originated in the desire of the Codhâites to participate in the sacred descent from Ishmael. It shows, however, how uncertain is Mahometan tradition of remote events. *M. C. de Perceval*, vol. i. p. 207.

the Azdites, this people, pressed by the Himyarite monarchy, and labouring under the difficulties occasioned by the great commercial changes, migrated to the neighbourhood of Mecca. There they fell out with the local tribes, and finally dispersed themselves in various directions. The *Bani Aslam* settled north of Medîna in the valley of Wadi-al-Cora: the *Bani Kalb* in Dûmat-al-jandal on the Syrian border: the *Bani Salîh* on the east of Palestine: the *Bani Yazîd* in Mesopotamia: and the *Taym Allât* in Bahrein. The dispersion took place towards the close of the second century.

and thence disperses in various directions northward and eastward 175-200 A.D.

About the same time, the BANI IYÂD and other off-shoots of the famous Meccan tribe* (the ancestors of the Coreish,) spread themselves eastward in the Peninsula.

Bani Iyâd, &c.

From each of these sources, certain bands of Azdite, Codhâite, and Meccan, Arabs, wandered towards Bahrein, where opposed in their eastward progress by the Persian Gulph, they combined together about the year 190 A.D., and, guided by the coast and by the southern bank of the Euphrates, alighted on the site of HÎRA, a few miles north-west of the more modern Cufa. There, attracted by the rich and well watered vicinity, the strangers took up their abode, and about A.D. 200 laid the foundations of the city. The Arsacide monarchy was then crumbling under revolt and disastrous war; and the young colony, swelled by needy adventurers and desperate refugees from Arabia, grew unmolested rapidly into an important State. Another city not far distant from Hîra, called Anbâr, was either founded, or having been previously in existence was taken possession of, by the Arabs.†

The city of Hira founded by bands of these tribes. A.D. 200.

* By the *Meccan* tribe I designate the ancestors of the Coreish running up to Adnân, and those of their descendants who continued in the neighbourhood and attached to Mecca.

† By some the establishment of this town has been referred back to the time of Nebuchadnezzar II. who is said to have left here the captives carried off in his inroad into Arabia. But this is a mere hypothesis of the Arab historians, who are very expert in imagining such causes for the origin of towns and kingdoms. Another theory is that Tibbân Asad Abu Carib, king of Yemen, left here his invalid soldiers; but his expedition did not take place till about 235 A.D. a considerable time after the foundation both of Hîra and Anbâr. The question is not one of much importance. The main point is undoubted, viz. that the kingdom of Hîra originated in an *Arab* colony.

It appears that there was at first both an Adzite and a Codhâite chief, the former at Anbâr, the latter at Hîra. The rule of MÂLIK the Azdite was terminated by his son, who in the darkness mistook him for an enemy, and killed him with an arrow. The dying father repeated these touching lines;— The first kin Mâlek, 195-215 A.D.

اعلمه الرمايه كل يوم * فلما اشتد ساعده رماني *

"Day after day I instructed him in the art of shooting;
And, when his arm became strong, he turned against me his bow."

The incident shows with what detail even at that remote period the history of Hîra has been preserved. As we advance, the detail becomes closer and more certain. The position of Hîra, adjoining the empire of Persia, and on the highway to Syria, induced an early civilization and acquaintance with letters. Arab poets frequented the court of Hîra, and their effusions were prized and preserved. There was thus abundant opportunity of poetical as well as of public record; and both having been conveyed down to the era of Islam, the history of this kingdom deserves our confidence. Special advantages possessed by Hîra for early historical record.

The parricide fled to Omân; and another son, JODZEIMA, succeeded to the government. During his reign the Sassanide dynasty arose in strength upon the ruins of the Arsacide. The Codhâite chief with his Bedouin followers spurned the claims of Persia upon their allegiance, and departed to Syria. Thus Jodzeima and the Azdite party were left in undivided possession of Hîra, which with its Arab tribes* became the willing vassal of the Persian king. Jodzeima, 205-268 A.D. Hîra becomes dependent on Persia.

Jodzeima made frequent incursions into Arabia, and in one of them was overtaken and beaten by the army of the Himyar monarch, Hassân Tobba. But his greatest and most continued efforts were directed against the Arab allies of the Roman Empire in Syria. His wars with the Arabs of Yemen and Syria.

* These consisted of three classes. I. The *Ibâd*, or inhabitants of Hîra and its environs. II. The *Tonûkhites*, or Arabs (Bedouin), who had immigrated from Arabia into the neighbouring country. III. The *Ahlâf*, their allies. The two latter dwelt in tents, and lived a nomad life on the pasture lands adjoining the Euphrates.

Hîra and the Mesopotamian Arabs sided with Persia; the Syrian tribes with Rome.

As Persia looked for the allegiance of Hîra and the eastern tribes, so Rome claimed as her allies or retainers the Arabs of Western Syria. In the struggle between the empires, the two divisions of the Syrian and Mesopotamian Arabs were wont to fight on their respective sides. Thus rivalry and frequent warfare sprang up, fomented by the private enmities of the Arab clans, and often receiving unexpected illustration in the pages of Roman history.

Jodzeima wars against the Syrian chief Amr, and kills him 260-270 A.D.

It was after the middle of the second century, according to Arabian authority, that the Roman Emperor (Marcus Aurelius Antoninus,) invested the chief of the Bani Samayda, *Odenath* or *Odzeina*, with the sovereignty of Syrian Arabia. The third or fourth in descent from him was *Amr* son of Tzarib, whose kingdom extended to the Euphrates and embraced a portion of Mesopotamia. He waged war in the middle of the third century, with various success, against Jodzeima king of Hîra, by whom he was at length killed. His widow,* *Zebbâ*, avenged the death of Amr by inviting Jodzeima under pretence of marriage to her capital, where she put him to death. The Arab annals abound with marvellous tales of Zebbâ. She possessed a tunnel below the Euphrates, and on either bank a fortress, one commanded by herself, the other by her sister Zeinab. Her summer residence was Tadmor, or Palmyra. The successor of Jodzeima (Amr son of Adi) resolved to revenge his murder, and by a stratagem introduced into the queen's citadel 2,000 warriors concealed as merchandize in bags hung across the backs of camels. Taken by surprise, Zebbâ fled to her river fortresses and, having in vain endeavoured to escape by one or the other, destroyed herself with a subtle poison which she always carried in a ring.† With Zebbâ the dynasty of Odzeina fell into obscurity.

the widow of Amr, Zebbâ, entraps and murders Jodzeima.

The son of Jodzeima by a singular stratagem surprises Zebbâ, who poisons herself.

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* According to some his daughter.

† Her speech on this occasion بيدي لا بيد ابن عدي "*Let me fall by my own hand, not by the hand of the son of Adi!*" is proverbial. So also the proverb— لامر ما جدع قصير انفه "*It was for an important end Cusseir cut off his nose*"—refers to the stratagem by which Cusseir, the minister of Adi, ingratiated himself with Zebba, representing

These details leave little doubt of the identity of Odenathus and his wife Zenobia of classical fame, with the Amr and Zebbâ of Arabic history. The family of Odenath, honoured with many immunities and illustrated by the royal surname of Septimius Severus, revolted against Rome, and about the middle of the third century declared Palmyra an independent government. Septimius Odenath, after hesitating betwixt the allegiance of Rome and Persia and on the captivity of Valerian inclining towards Sapor, at length entered upon a decisive struggle with Persia, and in several engagements vanquished the Persian armies, ravaged Mesopotamia, and covered himself with glory. By artful movements in a critical period of civil discord, he rendered essential service to the Emperor Gallienus, and was elevated as his colleague to the imperial purple. He was assassinated at Emessa by his nephew Mæonius.* But Zenobia killed the mur- 267 A.D.

Amr and *Zebba*, identified with Odenathus and Zenobia.

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that he had fled from the cruelty of Adi's son who had mutilated his nose. He became her merchant, and introduced the soldiers, in the manner stated above, as a new investment of goods. *M. C. de Perceval*, vol. ii. p. 38. The whole of these circumstances, with many fabulous adjuncts, will be found in *Price's Essay on Arabia antecedent to Mohammed*, chap. iv. Price's work is simply a compilation of Persian histories and legends, without any attempt at historical discrimination.

It is evident that these proverbs have an individual and exclusive reference to the incidents related, and must have taken their rise in those events, or in the popular tradition of them. Such is not the case with the great majority of the Arab proverbs mentioned by M. C. de Perceval in the course of his history as originating in special events or speeches: these are mostly of a general nature and, having nothing personal about them, are equally applicable to many different occasions. Thus, the adage "*Sweet honey in a bad jar*" (vol. ii. p. 651), or "*After disarming comes captivity, and after captivity death*," (*ibid.* p. 578,) might arise out of a thousand different circumstances.

* See the account of these events in *Gibbon's Decline and Fall*, chaps. x. and xi.; *M. C. de Perceval*, vol. ii. p. 193 *et seq.* If we followed only the similarity of names, *Zenobia* would stand for *Zeinab*, the sister of Zebba. It is remarkable that a *Zabda* or *Zaba* is also mentioned by the Greek and Roman authors, and Vopiscus speaks of "Zenobiam, et Zabam, ejus *Sociam*." as if the latter were a female: but as the person who went by that name was Zenobia's general in Egypt, the feminine gender must be a mistake, and the correspondence with the Arabic name accidental. Certainly the *character* of Zenobia agrees only with that of Zebbâ. *M. C. de Perceval*, vol. ii. p. 30, note 4.

derer, and after a short but splendid reign, and an opposition to the Roman army far from contemptible, fled from Palmyra and
273 A.D. was made prisoner as she reached the Euphrates. It can hardly be doubted that the Arabs and the Romans have styled the same hero by different appellations—the former by his proper name of *Amr*, the latter by his patronymic *Odenath*. As little need we hesitate to recognise in Zebba of Tadmor the Zenobia of Palmyra: beauty, chastity, commercial riches, acquaintance with the tongues of Syria, Greece, Italy and Egypt, and many other particulars common to both, point to one and the same individual.* The Arabian Zebba perished in a fruitless attempt to escape from her river battlements; the Roman heroine was captured as she was about to cross the Euphrates in a boat. But the Arabs mistook the enemy of Zenobia; it was not the king of Hîra, but the Emperor of Rome.†

Lakhmite dynasty. We return to Jodzeima, the Prince of Hîra. His daughter married Adi son of Rabia, the Lakhmite king of Yemen, (who emigrated with his family to Irac 205 A.D.‡) and gave birth to
Amr 268-288 A.D. AMR, whom Jodzeima adopted as his successor. Strange and fabulous are the Arab legends of this child. He was carried off by the genii, and after many years found by a cistern in the desert, with long dishevelled hair and nails like the claws of a bird.

* Consult the account given of her character and fortunes by Gibbon. *Decline and Fall*, chap. xi.

† This subject illustrates the feeble authority of unsupported Mahometan history of remote date:—"Les Arabes ont travesti l'histoire de Zénobie; ils font jouer au roi de Hîra Amr fils D'Adi, le rôle de l'empereur Aurélien dans le dénoûment du drame. Amr fils D'Adi pouvait avoir soutenu quelque guerre contre Zénobie; il aura suffi aux auteurs de la légende, pour lui attribuer la catastrophe de Zénobie ou Zebbâ, que le renversement de la puissance de cette reine ait eu lieu sous son règne." *M. C. de Perceval*, vol. i. p. 199. Gibbon has well drawn the same conclusion from a vital omission in the narrative of the East:—"So little has been preserved of eastern history before Mahomet, that the modern Persians are totally ignorant of the victory of Sapor, an event so glorious to their nation." *Decline and Fall*, chap. x. Mahometans look with coldness and indifference upon any conquests before the time of Islam; their *nationality* dates only from their Prophet. *M. C. de Perceval*, vol. ii. p. 21; *Price's Essay*, as above, p. 121, *et seq.*

‡ See p. clix. and Table at cxlix.

After Jodzeima's death he vanquished Zebba, as already related, and achieved several conquests. Amongst these was Mesopotamia; for after Zenobia's fall, the Romans loosened their grasp on that province, and it fell under the empire of Persia and the government of Hîra.*

Amr was succeeded by his son IMRUL CAYS I. who according to certain Arabian authors, was a convert to Christianity. The fact is improbable; but it is not unlikely that Christianity had been introduced among his *subjects* before the beginning of the fourth century.† Imrul Cays I. 288-338 A.D. Christianity introduced.

It was in this reign that Sapor II. of Persia visited some of the tribes of Central and Northern Arabia with severe reprisals for ravages committed during his minority. The brunt of his fury fell upon the Bani Iyâd, Bani Bakr, and other families of Meccan origin. To prevent similar incursions the king also caused a deep trench to be dug from the Persian Gulph along the frontier of Irac; and, though it formed but a feeble obstacle to the Arab insurgents, yet three centuries later, on the Moslem conquest, the remains of the *Khandac-Sabûr* or "trench of Sapor" were still visible near Cadesîya. The king of Persia attacks the Arabs, and digs the *trench of Sapor.*

After two or three intervening reigns NOMÂN I. reached the throne. Under his auspices Hîra became prosperous and powerful, and acquired the appellation *Hîrat al Nomân*, contracted by the Syrians, Greeks, and Romans into *Hirta.* Nomân I. 390-418 A.D.

Yezdegird, king of Persia, entrusted the education of his son, Bahrâm Gour, to Nomân, who built for his use on a salubrious site the famous palace of Khawarnac. The Greek architect imprudently divulged that if a certain stone, known to himself alone, were removed, the edifice would fall to the ground: Nomân Educates Bahrâm Gour. Palace of Khawarnac.

* This final result of the struggle may possibly have given the turn to the legend which connects the fall of Zenobia with the princes of Hîra. *M. C. de Perceval*, vol. ii. p. 46.

† M. C. de Perceval mentions on the authority of de Lequien (*Oriens Christianus*, ii. 1078,) that some Roman captives brought to Babylonia, introduced Christianity there about 271 A.D. Even apart from such cause, it is probable that, in the ordinary course of diffusion, Christianity had reached across the desert by that period. But the court of Hîra was addicted to idolatry for some time after.

resolved that the secret should perish with the builder: the unfortunate Sinnimâr was precipitated from one of the lofty bastions and dashed to pieces.*

Symeon the Stylite visited by multitudes from Mesopotamia &c. 410 A.D.

Under Nomân Christianity made rapid progress. It was about the year 410 A.D. that Simeon the Stylite retired to the top of a hill of Antioch, and by a life of wonderful austerity, and the fame of miraculous powers, attracted multitudes to his presence. Irâc and Arabia heard the rumour of his virtues. Many Arabs joined the throng of his admirers, and became well disposed to Christianity. Nomân, fearing perhaps lest enthusiasm for the Syrian monk might engender a leaning towards the Roman government, forbade his subjects under pain of death to visit the desert sanctuary. But the monarch saw a dream by night, in which Simeon appeared to chide him, and caused two of his disciples to administer a severe castigation for his ungodly conduct. The prince awoke smarting under the visionary chastisement, and made haste not only to withdraw the prohibition, but to allow the erection of churches and welcome the ministration of ecclesiastics. This narrative was received by a Roman General from the mouth of Nomân who added that, but for the dread of the Persian monarch, he would not have hesitated himself to become a Christian.† It is agreed by all that Nomân abandoned idolatry, and it is affirmed by some that he embraced the Christian faith. There is at any rate, good ground for believing that, dissatisfied with the world, and anxious to pass the rest of his days in quiet devotion, he abdicated the government, and about 418 A.D. disappeared.‡

Nomân I. encourages Christianity,

abdicates and disappears, 418 A.D.

* Hence "*to receive the reward of Sinnimâr*," means to be treated ungratefully.

† This was the period when Yezdegird distinguished himself by the persecution of Christianity, 416 A.D.

‡ Nearly two centuries afterwards the Poet Adî made allusion to this fact in the following verses, addressed as an admonition to Nomân V. his pupil, and a descendant of this prince:—

* تدبّر رب الخورفق اذ اشرف يرما و للهدى تفكير
* سرة ماله و كثرة ما يملك و البحر معرضا و السدير
* و ارعوى قلبه و قال و ما غبطة حى الى الممات يسير

Nomân was followed by MUNDZIR I. who finished the education of the famous Bahram, and aided him in securing the Persian crown. The persecution of Christianity, persevered in by Bahrâm, rekindled hostilities with the Roman empire. The Romans besieged Nisibis; Bahrâm hurried to its succour, while Mundzir with a cloud of Arabs threatened Syria and even Antioch. The churches were filled with suppliants to avert the coming vengeance; a panic seized the Arab troops, who turned their arms against each other and precipitated themselves into the Euphrates.* This occurred early in the reign of Mundzir. In 422 A.D. a lasting peace was concluded and we hear little more of him from the Greek and Latin historians, whose incidental notices of the border Arabs are confined to the wars between the two empires.

Mundzir I. 418-462 A.D.

Hostilities with the Romans.

Towards the end of the fifth century hostilities again broke out between Persia and Constantinople, and Nomân III. during his short reign was constantly engaged, with various fortune, in warfare with the Roman troops. About the beginning of the sixth century, an irruption of Arabs, independent alike of the Roman and of the Persian rule, carried terror and devastation throughout Syria. These were the Bani Bakr and other central clans, who under the guidance of the Kinda chief *Hârith*, son of Amr al Macsûr, (of whom there will be further mention hereafter,) threw themselves into Western Syria: but, having in 502 A.D. concluded a treaty with the Roman emperor, they turned their arms against the kingdom of Hîra, defeated the troops sent to oppose them, and

Noman III. 498-503 A.D.

Irruption of Hârith and central tribes into Syria and Mesopotamia

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"Reflect upon the Lord of Khawarnac, (for reflection leadeth to wisdom,) how, when one day he looked abroad from his battlements.

"His heart was entranced by the view of his wealth, the multitude of his possessions, the river that flowed beneath him, and the palace of Sedir:—

"But suddenly his heart smote him, and he said, *What is there to be envied in the living (possessor of all these things), seeing that he hasteth unto the dead?*"

Sedir was another famous country palace, which Nomân built for himself. *M. C. de Perceval*, vol. ii. p. 59.

* *Cnf. Gibbon*, chap. xxxii. These facts are of course gathered from the Greek and Latin authorities alone.

Interregnum at Hîra.

plundered the country all around. The panic and confusion were so great that Hârith seized possession of the defenceless city and assumed the government; but in a short time he retired with his Arab hordes to their native deserts.*

Imrulcays III 503-513 A.D. relations with Central Arabia.

After this interregnum, IMRULCAYS III. became fixed in the government of Hîra. In a previous incursion into Arabia, he had carried off the unrivalled beauty Ma-al-Samâ, or "*water of the heavens*," who bore him a son and successor, named Mundzir.† The seizure of this lady occasioned serious hostilities with Central Arabia; but they were at last put a stop to by the marriage of Mundzir with Hind daughter of Hârith, the marauding chief noticed above.

Mundzir III. 513-562 A.D.

The early part of the reign of MUNDZIR III. was full of trouble. At this time the communist principles of the imposter Mazdak, adopted and enforced by the sovereign Kobâd, were rife in

Reign of Socialism in Persia; and

Persia, and threatened society throughout the land with utter

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* Joshua the Stylite, a contemporary historian, calls these invaders *Thalabites*. Their leader is also called by Theophanes "Aretas surnamed *Thalabanes*," Ὁ τῆς Θαλαβανης, or *son of the Thalabitess*. The Arab historians tell us that the invaders were of the Bani Bakr, which corresponds with the title given them by the Greek writers as including the great branch of the descendants of *Thálaba*, the fourth in descent from Bakr son of Wâil. It is remarkable that Hârith's *mother* was descended from Thalaba, though his father was of the tribe of Kinda. The *Matronymic* of the Greek historian thus singularly coincides with the *facts* given us by the Arabs; and the coincidence imparts credibility to the whole narrative.

† He is called by the Greek historians Ἀλαμουνδαρος ὁ Σεκικης, or *Al Mundzir, the descendant of Shakika*. M. C. de Perceval, by an ingenious and apparently sound deduction, checks by means of this title a confusion in the chronology of the Arab historians themselves. Some of them misguided by the similarity of name, make Shakîka the mother of *Nomân* I.; whereas she must have been the wife of his son Mundzir I. and mother of *Nomân the Second*, who was the ancestor of Mundzir III. in the text. Mundzir I. had a second wife, Hind, the mother of Mundzir II.; and to distinguish Mundzir III. from him, he was styled by the Arabs "the descendant of Shakika." But had Shakîka been the wife of Mundzir *the First's* father, the title would have been meaningless, as applying to Mundzir II. as well as to Mundzir III. The phrase Ἀλαμουνδαρος ὁ Σεκικης preserved by the Greeks from the Arab currency of the day, thus ingeniously applied, serves to correct the later Arab authorities. *M. C. de Perceval*, vol ii. p. 77.

disorganization. Mundzir rejected the abominable doctrines; and in the year 518 A.D. his domains were by the Persian court assigned to the Arab Hârith. But principles so abhorrent from human nature could not long hold their ground. The imposter carried his arrogance to the pitch of demanding the queen of Persia: her son, the future Kesra (*Chosroes*) Anushirvan, boiled with indignation at the request; but he repressed his anger, and bided his time for revenge. The socialists* redoubled their efforts, and Kobâd at last seeing his throne in danger, abandoned the sect to his son. Kesra was not long in beheading Mazdac, and in one morning 100,000 of his followers are said to have atoned with their lives for their unheard of enormities.

expulsion of Mundzir from Hîra.

Mundzir, now aided by Kesra, having expelled Hârith from Hîra and pursued him with slaughter into Arabia, re-entered upon the government, 523 A.D. His reign was thenceforward not only prolonged but prosperous, and he attained to a power unknown by any of his predecessors.

Mundzir's subsequent prolonged and prosperous reign.

Abul Feda asserts, and Christian historians generally believe, that Mundzir III. was a convert to Christianity: but the conclusion is contradicted by stronger evidence. In the beginning of his reign he may have prosecuted enquiries into our faith; but there seems no reason to doubt that, like the generality of Arabs in his day, he remained a Pagan, and that towards the end of his life he alternately protected and persecuted the Christians.

Ecclesiastical statements that he was a Christian not supported.

Eutychian doctrine was at this time supported by the Emperor Anastasius, and caused dissension in the church. Severus, the Patriarch of Antioch, shortly after the accession of Mundzir III, sent two bishops to gain him over to his side. The prince listened a while to their arguments; but at last having adroitly entrapped them into the confession that angels could not die, he drew the deduction that much less could the divine nature be subject to death, and caused his reverend guests to retire in confusion. The

He confutes an Eutychian embassy.

* They appear to have coalesced with the *Manicheans*. Indeed the Greeks call both by the latter name: and the Arabs both by the term *Zenâdica*. Chap. xlii. of *Gibbon's Decline and Fall* may be consulted for the details of this period.

story is probably founded on fact, and illustrates the opposing heterodoxies that were gradually paving the way for Islam.

A deputation from Constantinople is present when Mundzir III. receives tidings of the massacre, in Najrân, 524 A.D.

Another deputation deserves especial notice. Two Grecian generals having fallen by the chance of war into the hands of the king of Hîra, the emperor Justin sent an ambassador named Abraham, with the bishop Simeon, to demand their deliverance. Failing to find Mundzir in his capital, they set out on the 20th January, A.D. 524, for his camp, which they reached ten days' journey to the south of Hîra. Their mission was successful. It was during this visit that Mundzir received the letter before noticed from the Jewish prince of Yemen, Dzu Nowâs, giving tidings of the butchery of the Christians in Najrân, and inviting him to follow the example he had set. After causing the letter to be read aloud to the army, in which was a great multitude of Christians, Mundzir thus addressed them:—"*See ye not how your fellow Christians are treated elsewhere? why will not ye renounce the religion of Jesus? Think ye that I will treat you more favourably than other princes who have proscribed them?*" From amid the ranks, a soldier boldly replied;—"*We were Christians before we were thy subjects. No one dare make us renounce our faith: if forced to defend ourselves, the arm and the sword of each of us are as good as the arm and the sword of any other.*" Daunted by the courageous answer, Mundzir continued to the Christians their liberty; but it is sufficiently evident that he was not a Christian himself.*

Allegiance of Central Arabia transferred to Persia, 530 A.D.

Soon after the death of Hârith, the influence of the tribe of Kinda, the representative of the Himyar dynasty in Central Arabia, waned and expired. The Abyssinian invaders (525 A.D.) were regarded with aversion by the Arabs, and the allegiance hitherto yielded to their predecessors in the government of Yemen was transferred to the house of Hîra, or rather to Persia of which

* It is however somewhat suspicious that this scene, so critical for the Christians of the East, should have been enacted just as the embassy happened to be there. The account may be coloured and exaggerated, but even its invention would have been in the highest degree improbable had Mundzir been a Christian.

it was the vassal.* This important change, which occurred about 530 A.D., enabled Mundzir, relieved of all apprehension from the south, and even strengthened by a new reserve of allies from that quarter, to prosecute his Parthian warfare against Syria. Suddenly as a thunderstorm his troops would darken some fated spot, sweeping in their train terror and devastation, captivity and death; they would as suddenly disappear, scorning the pursuit of the Roman army, which could find no sign of their enemy but in his ravages. For thirty years, with few intervals of truce, these hostilities were waged either against the Romans, or their ally the Arab dynasty of Ghassân.† It was in this period that Belisarius distinguished himself in repelling the inroads of the Chosroes, which reached even to Antioch,‡ and in

Mundzir prosecutes a long and destructive warfare against the Romans and their Arab allies.

* It was through the exercise of the influence thus acquired, that Mundzir III. put a stop to the desolating war, (the war of *Basûs*,) which so long raged between the Bakr and Taghlib tribes; and forced them to send to the court of Hîra eighty young men yearly as pledges of peace. These formed the corps of the *Rahâin*, and were regarded as the flower of Arab chivalry. The greater part, if not the whole of the Máaddite tribes (*i.e.* those of Meccan origin) submitted themselves to Hîra.

† In these lengthened campaigns the private disputes of their respective vassals not unfrequently embroiled the Persian and Roman Governments themselves, or were at least the *ostensible* cause of war. The following is an example:—"Unpractised in the art of violating treaties, he (the Persian King,) secretly excited his bold and subtle vassal Almondar. That prince of the Saracens, who resided at Hîra, had not been included in the general peace, and still waged an obscure war against his rival Arethas, (*i.e.* Hârith V.) the chief of the tribe of Ghassân, and confederate of the empire. The subject of their dispute was an extensive sheep-walk in the desert to the south of Palmyra. An immemorial tribute for the license of pasture appeared to attest the rights of Almondar, while the Ghassânide appealed to the Latin name of *Strata*, a paved road, as an unquestionable evidence of the sovereignty and labours of the Romans. The two monarchs supported the cause of their respective vassals; and the Persian Arab, without expecting the event of a slow and doubtful arbitration, enriched his flying camp with the spoil and captives of Syria." *Gibbon's Decline and Fall*, chap. xlii; *M. C. de Perceval*, vol. ii. p. 98.

‡ In 528 A.D. Mundzir appeared in the vicinity of Antioch, and burnt the suburbs of Chalcis (Kinasrîn). By the time the Roman troops were put in motion, he had regained the desert with a multitude of captives. *M. C. de Perceval*, vol. ii. p. 93. This is not to be confounded with the

preserving the Roman frontier. Mundzir was at last killed 562 A.D., in a campaign against Hârith V., of the Ghassân line.*

Amr III. 562-574 A.D.

AMR III. avenged the death of his father, by a fierce and instant attack upon the Ghassânide kingdom. Peace was soon after concluded between Persia and the Roman Empire. But Amr, dissatisfied at the discontinuance of a pension previously received by his father, sent an embassy of complaint to Constantinople; he was mortified by the incivility with which it was received, and again overran Syria with his armies. He also waged bloody wars with the Bani Tay and Bani Tamîm, the latter of whom had murdered his brother. He met with his death A.D. 574, in a singular mode, highly illustrative of Arab manners. He had vaingloriously sworn that his own mother should be served by the mother of the haughtiest Arab in the land. At an appointed festival, the mother of Amr a warrior-poet of the Bani Taghlib, was invited into the tent of the prince's mother, who sought to entrap her into the apparently insignificant act of handing to her a dish. But the proud spirit of the Arab lady spurned the office, and resenting the affront she screamed aloud for help. Amr the poet sprang forward at his mother's call, and struck Amr the prince dead upon the spot. It was in the eighth year of this king's reign that Mahomet was born.

Hostilities in Syria and Central Arabia.

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invasion of Syria and sack of Antioch by Chosroes in 540 A.D. *Gibbon*, chap. xlii.

* An incident in one of these Syrian campaigns throws light on the religious practices of the northern Arabs. In the year 541 A.D. Belisarius having convoked a council of war, two Roman officers in command of Syrian garrisons declined to follow the army to Nisibis, on the plea that their absence would leave Syria and Phenicia exposed to the attacks of Mundzir. Belisarius argued that as the summer solstice was at hand, when the Arabs devoted two months to the rites of their religion without resorting to arms, there was no cause for apprehension; and he promised to let them go when that period was expired. These were the months of Meccan pilgrimage: and hence we learn that Mundzir and the majority of his Arabs followed the religion of the Hejâz. On turning to the chronological tables of M. C. de Perceval, we find that at the period referred to the Meccan pilgrimage actually fell at the summer solstice;—a singular coincidence in confirmation of his system and calculations.

In another place Procopius loosely states, that Mundzir having made prisoner a son of the Ghassânide prince, immolated him to Venus. By Venus he may *possibly* mean Lât or Ozza.

Henceforward the glory of Hîra declined, and there is even an uncertainty about some of the successions to its sovereignty. In 580 A.D., MUNDZIR IV. was raised to the throne. Jealous of his brothers, or anticipating the success of the Romans, he repaired with his suite to Constantinople and abandoned the Persian cause. Subsequently, he again changed sides and went over to Hormuzd the Persian monarch, who conferred on him the crown of Hîra. He fell at last as a captive into the hands of the Romans, and for his defection was banished to Sicily.*

Mundzir IV. 580 A.D.

joins the Romans: for his defection banished to Sicily.

NOMÂN V. ABU CABUS succeeded to the throne. He was brought up by Adi, who was one of the most renowned of the city poets,† and whose life illustrates the history of Hîra. His remote ancestor Ayûb (Job), of the Bani Tamîm, a Bedouin tribe of Meccan origin,‡ committed murder, fled to the court of Hîra and, being received with distinction, settled there. The sixth in descent from him was the poet Adi, whose father and grandfather both held offices of trust at Hîra.§ Adi and his father were charged with the education of the young Nomân. In process of time Adi received at the Court of Persia the post of Arabic Secretary to the Monarch. In 581 A.D. he was despatched on a specific embassy to Constantinople, and entrusted with a rich present for the Emperor Tiberius. He travelled back by the imperial relays of horses, and by a route calculated to convey the largest idea of the power and resources of the Roman Empire. On his return to Medâin or Ctesiphon, he obtained leave of absence to revisit Hîra, where he was received by the prince and the people with triumphant acclamation. On this occasion he met, at the church of Tûma, *Hind*, the granddaughter of the reigning prince Mundzir IV., and daughter of his own pupil Nomân. As the damsel partook of the Sacrament, Adi caught a glimpse of her, and

Nomân V. Abu Cabus 583-605 A.D.

His preceptor Adi,

employed at the Court of Persia 575 A.D.

* This is the account of the Greek historians; the Arabs make him perish in a battle with the Ghassânide army.

† The city poets were regarded as inferior to the free poets of the desert.

‡ See the statement at p. cxcv.

§ His grandfather was secretary to Noman III., and his father director of the Post. On the death of Noman IV. his father was placed by the people in temporary charge of the government.

Marries Hind daughter of Noman V.

became enamoured.* His passion was reciprocated, and though she was scarce eleven years old, they were united in marriage.

Adi and Hind both Christians.

These facts show that both Adi and Hind professed the Christian faith. It is agreed by all that Nomân V. was likewise of the same religion; and by some his conversion is attributed to the instruction of his preceptor Adi.†

Adi imprisoned and murdered by Noman.

It was by Adi's influence at the court of Persia that Nomân V. was chosen from amongst his brothers to be the king of Hîra. But that influence procured for Adi enemies at home. He was misrepresented to Nomân who, forgetful of what he owed to him both as preceptor and patron, deceitfully invited him to Hîra, cast him into prison and, notwithstanding the remonstrances of the king of Persia, put him to death. His widow Hind retired to a convent, which was thenceforward called by her name (*Dâyr Hind*). She survived to see Hîra fall into the hands of the

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* This occurred on a *Maundy Thursday*,—with such detail has the narrative been preserved.

† It is said that he was won over from idolatry to Christianity thus: The prince and his preceptor chanced in their walks to pass by a cemetery situated between the city and the river. Adi said, "*Dost thou know what the inhabitants of these tombs say? This is their language,*"

ایها اکـکب ا لمخبون علی الارض مجدون *
مثل ما انتم حیینا و کما نحن تکونون *
ربب رکب قد اناخوا حولنا * یشربن الجمر بالماء الزلال *
ثم اضحوا لعب الدهر بهم * وکذلک الدهر حال بعد حال *

"Oh ye company of travellers hasting along upon the earth and labouring!
Like you, *we* lived; like us, *ye* too shall die!
Many a company have made their camels kneel down around us;—
And as they halted, quaffed wine mingled with the limpid stream;—
The morning passed away, and lo! they had become the sport of time;—
Even thus is time but one change following upon another."

Noman was deeply moved by the solemn warning conveyed in these touching lines, and embraced the Christian faith.

Others say that Simeon, the bishop of Hîra, delivered him from a demon by which he had been possessed: and that he then became a Christian.

Under any circumstances it is agreed that he was converted before his accession to the throne. *M. C. de Perceval*, vol. ii. p. 143.

Moslem army. To crown the strange vicissitudes of her life, the warrior Mughîra, the Mahometan commander of Irâc, repaired to her convent in the year 661 A.D. and demanded the hand of the princess, then about ninety years of age, in marriage. "If it were my youth or my beauty," she replied, "that dictated the proposal, I should not refuse; but your desire is that you may say *The kingdom of Nomân, and with it his daughter, have passed into my hands.* Is not that your thought?" Mughîra confessed that it was, and she scorned the union. This insulting interview she did not long survive.

Singular vicissitudes in the history of his widow Hind.

Hîra no longer retained the prestige of victory over the Central Arabs. The troops of Nomân V. were discomfited by the Bani Yarbó, a branch of the Bani Tamîm, from whom his court wished to take the *Riddfa* or Lieutenancy, and give it to another tribe.* The two sons of Nomân were captured, but generously released by the Bani Yarbó, who preserved the privileged post.

Nomân V. defeated by the Bani Yarbó.

Nomân V. is famous in the annals of Arabia chiefly because his reign approached close upon the rise of Islam, and he was the patron of several renowned poets who celebrated his name.† But his end was darkened by disgrace and misfortune. Zeid, the son of Adi, resolved, by a stratagem, as singular as it proved successful, to revenge the murder of his father. He pictured in warm colours the charms of the women of Hîra before the king of Persia, who readily adopted the suggestion that some of the fair relatives of his vassal might well adorn the royal harem. An embassy, charged with this errand, was despatched to Nomân who, surprised and alarmed by the demand, expressed aloud his wonder that the monarch of Persia was not satisfied with the *antelope* beauties of his own land. The term was equivocal, and Nomân was denounced as having insulted the

He incurs the displeasure of the Persian Court.

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* The *Ridf* took his place at the right hand of the king, rode behind him, &c. The office was established by Mundzir III. *M. C. de Perceval*, vol. ii. p. 102.

† His name has descended in many ways. His partiality for the flower called the *anemone*, procured for it that name: for it was called Shacâick *an-nomân*, شقايق النعمان—So also a town built by him on the right bank of the Tigris, between Wâsit and Baghdâd, was called *Nomaniya*. *M. C. de Perceval*, vol. ii. p. 156.

females of Persia by likening them to *cows*. The wrath of the Chosroes fell heavily upon his ungallant vassal, and he fled from Hîra. After vainly wandering in search of allies among the Arab tribes, he left his arms in the custody of Hânî a chief of the Bani Bakr, and in despair delivered himself up to the king of Persia. The unfortunate prince was passed in mockery between two long rows of lovely girls splendidly attired, and by each was taunted with the question whether *she* was a Persian *cow*. He was cast into prison, and there died or was murdered. Thus ended the LAKHMITE DYNASTY in the year 605 A.D., having lasted for the long space of 327 years.

The Lakhmite dynasty terminates 605 A.D.

An Arab of the tribe of Tay, who had rendered service in action to the king of Persia, was raised, but within circumscribed limits, to the government of Hîra. Meanwhile the Chosroes demanded of Hânî the arms and property which Nomân had deposited with him. The Bani Bakr resented the claim, and indignant at the murder of Nomân assumed a hostile attitude, and carried pillage and confusion into the Persian provinces. The king vainly endeavoured to check them by conferring upon Cays, one of the Bani Bakr chiefs, an extensive grant of land around *Obolla*, on the right bank of the Tigris. But, notwithstanding the efforts of Cays and the hospitality by which he sought to render popular the Persian cause, the depredations still continued, and the king resolved on inflicting a signal retribution upon his rebellious vassals. The influence of Hîra assisted in swelling with Arab allies the vast Persian army, which was to crush the Bani Bakr. But the word of alarm had been given, and as it rapidly passed from clan to clan amongst the ramifications of that great tribe, the Arabs flocked to the rendezvous in the valley of Dzu Câr. The opposing ranks were about to close, when the iron-hearted Hantzala, who had been by acclamation chosen commander, with his own hand severed the girths of the camels on which were seated his wife and the other women of the tribe; and thus abandoned them, in case of defeat, to certain captivity. The Arabs fought with desperate bravery, and the Persian army was completely routed. This defeat, ominous of the fate of Persia, took place A.D. 611. A few months previous, Mahomet, now forty years of age, had entered on his prophetical career.

An Arab raised to the government of Hîra.

The Bani Bakr oppose the king of Persia;

and defeat him in the battle of Dzu Câr, 611 A.D.

The Chosroes, enraged at this defeat, deposed Iyâs, the Arab Governor of Hîra; which, ruled thereafter by a Persian grandee called Zâdiya, fell into the rank of a common Satrapy, and remained thus till swallowed up in the Mahometan Empire. Hîra becomes a Satrapy of Persia.

The Bani Bakr continued to maintain the independence which they had achieved at Dzu Câr. The other tribes of Central Arabia, hitherto held in vassalage by the Persian king through his Arab representative at Hîra, now spurned the patronage of a Persian Satrap, and regarded with contempt the power of a nation torn by discord, and of a throne paralyzed by unceasing successions. The warrior Prophet was now rising into view as the paramount chief in Arabia, and the central and western tribes between 628 and 631 A.D. joyfully transferred their allegiance from a foreign and decrepit power to a native and vigorous government. But the Arab tribes of Mesopotamia, who professed Christianity, still continued for some years longer to oppose Islam, and to recognize the authority of Persia. The Arab tribes shake off their fealty to Persia, and transfer it to Mahomet, 628-631 A.D.

SECTION III.

The Ghassânide Dynasty.

We now turn to the kingdom of the GHASSÂNITE Arabs, situated on the western side of the Syrian desert.

The fortunes of Odenathus and Zenobia, who belonged to the Ghassânide tribes, have been already traced. After their fall the Romans recognized as kings or phylarchs of the Syrian Arabs the chiefs of the Bani Salîh,* or of the Tonûkhites who came westward from Hîra.† Kings or phylarchs of the Syrian Arabs recognized by the Raomns.

It has been related above‡ how about 120 A.D. a great body of the Azdites emigrated from Yemen. They halted in the Hejâz in their northward progress; but, after a lengthened residence in The Azdites assume the name of Ghassân in

* A Codhâite tribe, which, as above-mentioned, migrated from Yemen to Syria. *Vide supra*, p. clxvi.

† See note at p. clxvii.

‡ See p. clvi.

their northward journey from Yemen.

the valley of Batn Marr not far from Mecca, they found the country too confined for them; and again, in the beginning of the third century pursued their northern journey. About this time they received the appellation of *Ghassân* from their long residence, by the way, near a fountain of that name. At last, during the dynasty of Odenath, they emerged on the plains of Bosra, and the country of Balcâa. The Bani Salîh, who inhabited the vicinity, allowed them by direction of the Roman authorities to settle, but demanded a tribute, which after an unsuccessful struggle the proud Ghassânites consented to pay. But they paid unwillingly, and watched for an opportunity to throw off the yoke. About the close of the third century, during an altercation between one of the chiefs and the tax-gatherer of the Bani Salîh, the latter was killed; both tribes took up arms, and the Ghassânite party were completely victorious. The Roman authorities were little interested in the struggle. They needed a barrier between Syria and the Persian frontier; but they were indifferent whether it consisted of the Bani Salîh, or of the Bani Ghassân. When therefore the latter agreed to be their faithful allies, the Romans made no difficulty in acknowledging their chief THÁLABA son of Amr, as the phylarch or king of the Ghassânites. It was stipulated that, in case of need, the Arab should aid the Emperor with 20,000 men; while the Emperor guaranteed to succour his ally by an army 40,000 strong.*

They settle in Syria in the 3rd century.

Contest with the Bani Salîh.

Their chief, Thâlaba, recognized as phylarch by the Romans, end of 3rd century.

About the year 300 A.D., the Government passed into the hands of another THÁLABA,† the fifth in descent from Amr Mozaikia,‡ and progenitor of the famous Ghassânide Dynasty. The history of this line is not so certain as that of Hîra. There

Thâlaba, A.D. 300, the first of the Ghassânide dynasty.

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* These are the accounts of the Arab writers.

† *Arethas* or *Hârith* is a very frequent name of the Ghassân princes; but there is no ground (as held by Scaliger,) for believing that it was a title *common to all* the Syrian phylarchs. Several of the Ghassânite kings called *Jabala*, are also styled *Hârith*. This surname, which signifies a *lion*, was probably adopted by them in opposition to that of Mundzir (*a dog*,) borne by many of their rivals, the Kings of Hîra. *M. C. de Perceval*, vol. ii. p. 210; see above, note, chap. ii. p. cxxi.

‡ See above, p. clvi.

was here no fixed seat of Government; each prince made choice of one for himself, or spent his life in the camp. The continuous evidence arising out of a settled capital is therefore wanting, and we find much confusion in the number, succession, and names of the kings. The presence of several subordinate or independent dynasties on the borders of Arabia, which it is not always easy to distinguish from the Ghassânides, introduces another element of uncertainty.

comparative uncertainty of its history.

The elevation of Thálaba excited such jealousy and discontent throughout the rest of the Ghassân tribe, that two branches, descended from *Aws* and *Khazraj* (grandsons of Amr Mozaikia), separated from their brethren, and returned southwards. They settled at Yathreb or Medîna, where they will be found at a subsequent part of our story. On the first rise of Islam, we know that their descendants were still Pagans, and worshipped idols; a fact which seems to disprove the Arab account that the Bani Ghassân professed Christianity, and built monasteries, in the middle of the second century. It is indeed possible that the Aws and Khazraj may have *relapsed* into idolatry after quitting Syria; but it is more probable that the whole Ghassân tribe were then Pagan, and did not embrace Christianity till the era of Constantine, when many political inducements were brought to bear upon their conversion.

The two tribes of Aws and Khazraj return south, and settle at Medina early in 4th century.

The Bani Ghassân converted to Christianity *after* their departure.

The discontent of the Ghassânides was speedily quelled by the success of HÂRITH, the son of Thálaba, in his predatory excursions, and by the rich plunder he was able to divide among his followers. It is supposed that Christianity was adopted by the tribe under JABALA, the successor of Hârith, about the middle of the fourth century.*

Hârith I. and Jabala, 303-360 A.D.

During the next reign, that of HÂRITH II., occurred the ill-fated expedition of Julian against Persia. We learn from Roman

Hârith II. 360-363 A.D.

* This would be the period when politically its introduction was most probable. But there is no direct proof. Sozomenes asserts that an Arab Prince, *Zacome* (called by Liquien *Zaracome*,) having obtained a son through the prayers of a monk, was with his whole tribe converted to Christianity: but it is difficult to identify any such prince in the Ghassân line. The nearest approach M. C. de Perceval can make is in the name of *Arcam*, a grandson of THALABA. *Ibid*, p. 215.

Perfidy towards the Romans on the defeat of Julian.

history that the Ghassânide allies, discontented with the stoppage of the accustomed subsidies, took advantage of the reverses of the imperial army, harassed its retreat, and cut up its rear guard.*

Mâvia, 373-380 A.D.

Hârith was succeeded by his widow MÂVIA, who also turned her arms against the Romans, and devastated Phœnicia and Palestine. She defeated the troops sent against her, but consented to peace on condition that Moses, a holy man renowned for his miracles, should be sent as the Bishop of her nation. Having been drawn from his solitude, Moses was consecrated to the charge, and destroyed the remains of idolatry still lurking amongst the Bani Ghassân. Mâvia gave her daughter in marriage to the Count Victor; and by her subsidy of Arab horse contributed essentially to the defence of Constantinople against the Goths.† During the succeeding century little is known of the Ghassânides besides an imperfect and sometimes confused list of names, and a few warlike encounters with the Kings of Hîra.

supports the Romans.

Jabala III. (Hârith IV.) 495-529 A.D.

We pass on to JABALA III., who is also styled HÂRITH IV. He belonged to another branch of the house of Thálaba, and many historians date from him the commencement of the Ghassânide lineage. He is styled *Al Akbar* the Great, as the first of three famous Hâriths who illustrated the fortunes of the dynasty. His wife *Mâria Dzât al Curtain*, "Mary of the ear-rings," belonged to the Yemen tribe of Kinda; and the sister of Mary was married to the chief of the same tribe, *Hojr Akil al Morâr*. It is not certain how this alliance was contracted; for we find Hârith at war with the Bani Kinda, whose chief *Amr al Macsûr* son of Hojr, he killed in battle. Hârith at last perished in an encounter with Mundzir III., of Hîra. Strange stories are related of the ear-

Relations with the tribes of Central Arabia.

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* See *Gibbon's Decline and Fall*, chap. xxiv. But the name of "*Malek Rodosaces*, the renowned Emir of the tribe of Ghassân," it is not possible to connect with any in the Ghassân line.

† This is from the Grecian historians, Theophanes and Ammianus. M. C. de Perceval shows that the Arabs appeared to have confounded *Mâvia* with *Maria*, a princess who lived about a century later—another specimen of the critical skill of our Arab historians. The error might easily occur in careless Arabic writing.

rings of his wife, which are proverbial as significant of inestimable value.* According to some, she presented them either before or upon her adoption of Christianity to the temple at Mecca: according to others, they remained in possession of her descendants, and were worn by Jabala VI., when in 637 A.D., he visited Mecca to do homage to Omar.

The famous earrings of his wife Maria.

The Roman historians notice, about this time, two phylarchs who must have been distinct from the Bani Ghassân. One called *Abo-Charib* (Abu Karib) received the chieftainship of the Arabs of Palestine, in exchange for "a country washed by the Red Sea."† He assisted the Romans against the rebel Samaritans, and received in return 20,000 prisoners, whom he sold into Persia and Abyssinia. The other, Cays a prince of the Kinda, is also mentioned as having received an Arab principality from Justinian, about the year 536.‡

Two Arab chiefs mentioned by Roman historians;—Abu Carib, and Cays.

HÂRITH V., surnamed *the Lame*, is styled with satisfactory accuracy by Procopius, "Arethas, son of Gabala," *i.e.* of Jabala III. He is celebrated for the honors showered upon him by Justinian who, in consideration of his doubtful aid against the Persians, conferred upon him the title of *King*,§ and the rank of Patrician. In 531 A.D. he contributed to the defeat of Belisarius, by his "treacherous or cowardly desertion" at the battle of Callinicus.‖ Ten years later, he assisted Belisarius in an inroad upon Mesopo-

Hârith V. 530-572 A.D.

Treacherous assistance rendered to the Romans.

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* Thus,—خذه و لو بقرطي ماريه "Take it, even if at the cost of the ear-rings of Mary." Each, they say, was formed of a pearl the size of a pigeon's egg.

† It is described by Procopius as bounded by Palestine on the north, by the country of the *Maaddenians* on the south, stretching ten days' journey to the east, and producing only palms. *M. C. de Perceval*, vol. ii. p. 231.

‡ Malala and Theophanes refer to Hârith as having been in hostility with the Roman commander of Phenicia, and obliged to quit the province and betake himself in exile to the desert. During some such interregnum, the princes here referred to may have reigned: or Palestine may have formed a phylarchy separate from that of the Bani Ghassân. It seems difficult to believe that Abocharab, the chief of Palestine, could have been the Hârith al Araj of the Arabs. *Idem*, p. 237, note.

§ Hitherto the title had been *Phylarch.*

‖ See *Gibbon's Decline and Fall*, chap. xli.

tamia, and by creating a diversion foiled the ambitious plans of Chosroes: but again he acted treacherously, and secured for himself the sole booty of a rich tract of country, while by false advices he beguiled the Romans, who long waited under a pestilential sun in the vain expectation of his return.* The Arab historians are silent upon these exploits, but they relate an expedition against the Jews of Tayma and Khaibar.

His visit to Constantinople 562 A.D.

The wars of Hârith V. with Hîra have already been related, under the reigns of Mundzir III. and Amr III.† Hârith visited Constantinople A.D. 562, to complain of the hostilities of Amr after the conclusion of peace, and to procure the recognition of his son Hârith as his successor. It was towards the end of the reign of Hârith the Lame that Mahomet was born.

Hârith the Less, 572-587 A.D.

Of HÂRITH THE LESS little is related, but that he obtained a victory over Mundzir III., at Ayn Obâgh; and indeed the kingdom of the Ghassânides does not henceforth occupy any distinguished place in the pages of history. The successor of this prince, AMR IV., surnamed ABU SHAMMIR, has been rendered illustrious by his patronage of the poets of Arabia. It was in his reign that Hassân ibn Thâbit, the famous poet of Islam and friend of Mahomet, first appeared at the Ghassânide court, where he met his fellow poets Nâbigha and Alcama, and began to enjoy the favor of a dynasty several of whom distinguished him by peculiar honors.

Amr IV., Abu Shammir, 587-597; his patronage of Arab poets.

600-630 A.D. Hârith VII.

From 600 to 630 A.D., the chief ruler of the Ghassânites was HÂRITH VII., son of Abu Shammir, whose residence appears to have been sometimes at Jabia, sometimes at Ammân (*Philadelphia*), the capital of Balcâa.‡ In 629 A.D., Mahomet addressed

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* See *Gibbon's Decline and Fall*, chap. xlii. † See above, p. clxxvi. *et. seq.*

‡ At the end of the 5th century the rule of the chief branch of the Ghassânites extended over Jaulân and Haurân, as the following verses by Nâbigha Dzobiâni, on the Death of Noman VI. (597-600 A.D.) prove.

بكى حارث الجولان من فقد ربه * وحوران منه خاشع متضائل

Jaulân (*Gaulonitis*, or the *Golan* of Deut. chap. iv. 43; Joshua, chap. xx.; 1 Chron. chap. vi.) is the high mountainous country east of the lake of Tiberias. Haurân (*Auranitis*) is adjacent to it.

to him a summons to embrace the cause of Islam, which he contemptuously refused, and shortly after died.* Contemporaneously with Hârith, and probably subordinate to him, there reigned at Palmyra AYHAM son of Jabala; and there also existed other inferior governments, such as that of SHURAHBÎL son of Jabala IV. at Maâb and Muta, in Arabia Petrea.† The inferior governments of Ayham, and Shurahbîl.

Meanwhile the glory of the Ghassânide rule was departing. The inroads of the Persians, in the reign of Phocas and in the early years of Heraclius, had given a shock from which it never recovered. It is remarked, even by a Mahometan writer, that the decadence of the race of Ghassân was preparing the way for the glories of the Arabian Prophet.‡ Wane of the Ghassânide kingdom prepares the way for Islam.

The last king of the race was JABALA VI., son of Ayham. Hassân the poet always spoke of this prince with a grateful affection; and although, on embracing Islam, he discontinued his visits to the Ghassânide court, he was still honoured by Jabala with special marks of friendship. During Abu Bakr's Caliphate, this prince took an active, but always unfortunate, part in opposing the inroads of the Moslem armies, and he shared in the Jabala VI. 630-637 A.D.

At this time there was, apparently, a division in the kingdom; for we find Hojr II. and Amr V., two grandsons of Hârith the Lame, ruling over the Arabs of Palestine as far as Ayla on the Red Sea, (590-615 A.D.) Thus Hassân ibn Thâbit writes:—

* من يغر الدهر او يامنه من قبيل بعد عمر و حجر

* ملكا من جبل الثلج الى جانبى ايله من عبد و در

"Who shall deceive time, or feel secure from its attack henceforth, after Amr and Hojr—the two princes who ruled over the bond and the free, from the snow-capt hills to the boundaries of Ayla." *M. C. de Perceval*, vol. ii. p. 249.

The "mountains of snow" are probably the high ranges of Tiberias. This branch was probably overthrown in the destructive war again kindled between Persia and the West, in the first stage of which Chosroes overran Syria, plundered Antioch Damascus and Jerusalem, and carried his ravages even to the borders of Egypt.

* *Kâtib al Wâckidi*, p. 50.

† See also the account of an embassy from Mahomet to certain rulers in Ammân. *Idem*, p. 59½.

‡ *Thaâlebi; Tabacât al mulûk; M. C. de Perceval*, vol. ii. p. 2.

Goes over to Islam, but subsequently recants.

humiliation of the mournful day of Yarmuk. When Heraclius abandoned Syria, he joined Omar and professed to believe in Mahomet; but his faith in the new Prophet was neither deep nor lasting. On a fancied insult he recanted, and retired to Constantinople, where his name and his family long survived.*

The special influence exercised by Hîra and the Ghassânide kingdom upon Central Arabia.

The Arab race, secluded from the rest of the word by pathless deserts, a peninsular position, and the peculiarities of nomad life, has in all ages maintained an extraordinary freedom from the contamination either of foreign blood or foreign manners, and a singular independence both of mind and institutions. Egypt, Syria, Persia, and the Abyssinian kingdom of Axum, bordered closely upon Arabia, or were separated from it only by narrow inlets of the ocean; yet their inhabitants exercised little influence on its social and political fortunes. They had no sympathy with the manners, and little acquaintance with the language of the people; while the inhospitable and barren steppes of the peninsula never permitted the successful encroachment of their arms. But the dynasties of Hîra and of the Ghassânides were native to Arabia, and composed of elements which blended with the Arab mind, or at least left their impression upon it. Both in warlike and social relations there was with them a close connection. It was through them that the Arabs communicated with the external world, and received their ideas of Europe as well as of Asia. Hîra, moreover, since the fall in Yemen of the Himyar line, became the paramount power in Central Arabia, —a power whose supremacy was acknowledged by all. To this cause, and to the permanence and prosperity of its capital, it was owing that Hîra enjoyed a larger *political* influence than the Ghassânide kingdom. But the latter, though inferior to the court of Hîra in magnificence and stability, possessed, especially over the Western Arabs, a more important *social* power. It lay closer to the Hejâz, and in the direct line of its commerce. There was, therefore, with its prince and people a frequent interchange of civility both in casual visits at the court, and in the regular

The Hejâz chiefly affected by the Ghassânide Court.

* See *Kâtib al Wâckidi*, p. 51; and *M. C. de Perceval*, vol. ii. p. 257.

passage of the mercantile caravans through the country. It is to this quarter, therefore, that we must chiefly look for the external influences which moulded the opinions of Mecca and Medîna.*

SECTION IV.

Origin, and early History, of Mecca.

Traditional history of Mecca ascends above the Christian era: of the other tribes ordinarily only to the 4th century A.D.

Leaving now the outskirts of Arabia, I proceed to sketch the history of the chief tribes occupying the centre of the peninsula, and to trace the rise and progress of Mecca.

The traditional history of Mecca, and of the Coreishite stock, goes back further than that of the other Bedouin tribes. Their fixed habitation in the valley of Mecca strengthened and perpetuated the local tradition, (a mixture of fact and fable), which ascends to a century before the Christian era. The accounts of the *desert* tribes on the other hand, seldom commence more than two centuries before the birth of Mahomet.

The legend of the founding of Mecca by Abraham and Ishmael.

The founding of Mecca by Abraham and Ishmael is so clearly a legendary fiction, that we need not have adverted to it at all except to enquire in what facts or popular notions it took its rise. The outline of the legend, interwoven as usual with a profuse

* It is hence in the same direction that we must seek for the Christian influences which left their impression on the Western Arabs. We have no very satisfactory intimation as to the peculiar phases of Christianity exhibited by the people of Hîra, and by the Ghassânites, respectively. The former, being independent of Constantinople, would be more likely to embrace and retain the Nestorian doctrines popular in the East. The Government of Ghassân was under Roman influence, and would, probably, embrace the sectarian principles, whether Eutychian, Arian, or Orthodox, enforced by the Emperor of the day; and thus these would eventually influence Western Arabia. But there is nothing more remarkable than the gross ignorance of some of the leading features of Christianity, which, notwithstanding all the means of information which at any rate during his residence at Medîna he possessed, is displayed by Mahomet. The subject is farther discussed in the last chapter of this volume.

variety of circumstantial colouring, is as follows. The wandering Hagar reaches with her boy the valley of Mecca; in the agonies of thirst she hastes to and fro from the little hill of Marwa to that of Safa, seeking for water. Ishmael, whom she has left on the ground lamenting, kicks around him in childish passion, when lo! the spot thus struck bubbles forth in a sweet and limpid stream beneath his feet; it is the well of Zamzam. A tribe of Amalekites are tempted by the fountain to the place, and among them the youthful Ishmael grows up. On an eminence in the vicinity, Abraham, in fulfilment of the divine behest communicated in a dream, was about to offer up his son, when his arm was stayed, and a vicarious sacrifice was prescribed, and accepted from him. The youth was married to an Amalekite wife, but during the absence of her husband she proved inhospitable to Abraham, who chanced to arrive as a guest: at the monition of the offended patriarch, Ishmael put her away, and married another. Two Yemen tribes, the *Jorhom* and *Catûra*, about this time arrived in the vicinity; the wicked Amalekites, who vainly opposed their settlement, were expelled by a plague of ants, and the strangers succeeded to their place. It was with the daughter of the Jorhom Chief that Ishmael celebrated his second nuptials. On a subsequent visit, Abraham assisted by his son proceeded to erect the Kaaba, and to reconstitute the ancient rites of pilgrimage on the sacred spot. After Ishmael and his son Nâbit (*Nebaioth*), the management of the temple devolved on Modâdh the Jorhom Chief, who held the imposts of the northern or upper part of Mecca, while Samayda the Catûra Chief held the southern. But a quarrel having arisen between the two tribes, the Bani Jorhom, aided by the descendants of Ishmael,* expelled the Bani Catûra who joined, and were lost amongst, the Amalekites. From this point (which the juxtaposition with Ishmael would make at least 2000 years anterior to Mahomet) to Adnân, who lived a little before the Christian era, the legend is blank: and although the ready pen of the traditionists has filled up the space by a list of Mahomet's

Amalekites.

Bani Jorhom and Bani Catûra.

The Amalekites and Bani Catûra expelled.

The Bani Jorhom and Ishmaelites unite and constitute the *Mustáriba*.

* They were called *Mustáriba, i.e.* half-cast Arabs. See above, p. cli, note *.

progenitors derived from Jewish sources, yet Mahomet himself never traced his pedigree higher than Adnân, and declared that all who went further back were guilty of fabrication and falsehood.*

Fictitious character of the genealogy prior to the Christian era.

Even in the time of Adnân we find ourselves encompassed with legend and with doubt. Bakht-nassar, or Nebuchadnezzar, according to the traditionists, attacked Arabia and, having routed Adnân and the Jorhomites, devastated Mecca and carried off to Babylon a multitude of captives. But Providence watched over Adnân's son Máadd whom, by the command of the Lord, Eremia and Abrakhia (Jeremiah and Baruch) took with them and nurtured

Even in the time of Adnân legend is suppositious: his era (130 B.C.) being confounded with that of Nebuchadnezzar (577 B.C.)

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* "Beyond Adnân," said Mahomet, "none but the Lord knoweth, and the genealogists lie" كذب النسابون *Kâtib al Wâckidi*, p. 9. Yet the Secretary, as well as other biographers, gives a list of some forty names between Adnân and Ishmael. The manner in which these genealogies have been got up has been explained above in a note at the beginning of chapter ii. That these lists are in *all* instances borrowed from Jewish sources is fairly admitted by the Secretary of Wâckidi in the following passage:—

و لم ار بينهم اختلافا ان معد من اولاد قيدر بن اسماعيل و هذا الاختلاف في نسبه يدل على انه لم يحفظ و انما اخذ ذلك من اهل الكتاب و ترجموه لهم فاختلفوا فيه ولو صح ذلك كان رسول الله اعلم الناس به فالامر عندنا على الانتهاء الى معد بن عدنان ثم الامساك عما وراء ذلك الى اسماعيل ابن ابراهيم *

"And I have met with no difference of opinion in respect of Máadd being of the children of Caydar, son of Ishmael; but this discrepancy in the genealogy between them gives proof that it (*i.e.* the genealogy) has not been preserved, but has been taken from the Jews, and they have translated it unto them, and they have differed therein; and if this (genealogy) had been really correct, then the prophet of the Lord had been better acquainted with it than any other person. So my conclusion is, that the genealogical detail ends with Adnân, and that we must hold back from anything beyond that till we reach Ishmael, son of Abraham." *Kâtib al Wâckidi*, p. 9½.

This is a clear admission that up to Adnân Mahomet's genealogy is *native*, *i.e.* derived from indigenous Arabian tradition; but beyond Adnân, that it has been borrowed from the Jews.

safely in the land of Harran. But between Mahomet and Adnân there is an ascertained interval of only eighteen generations, so that by careful calculation the birth of Adnân cannot be assigned to an earlier date than 130 B.C.;* while the ravages of Nebuchadnezzar's army occurred B.C. 577.† Thus, even in events comparatively modern, legend spurns the limitations of reason and chronology.

Dynasty of Jorhomite kings of Mecca, 100 B.C.—200 A.D.

After the expulsion of the Bani Catûra, the Jorhomites remained supreme at Mecca, and a list of their kings is given for nine generations, that is for nearly three centuries, beginning about 100 B.C.‡ During this period, in which (according to the language of the Moslems), the Jorhomites *usurped* the privileges of the Kaaba, of right belonging to the descendants of Ishmael, the following successions took place among the ancestry of the Coreish.§

Adnân born, 130 B.C.

ADNÂN begot two sons, *Máadd* and *Akk*. The descendants of Akk moved to the south of Jidda, and mingled with the Yemenites.

Máadd born, 97 B.C.

MÁADD‖ had four grandsons, *Modhar*, *Rabia*, *Iyâd* and *Anmâr*,

* This is the calculation of M. C. de Perceval. The dates of the more immediate progenitors of Mahomet are in his computation taken at their ascertained ages. Beyond that, there being no other data, the length of each generation is reckoned at the average period of thirty-three years.

† For M. C. de Perceval's view of these events, see note shortly below.

‡ In arranging the chronology of these kings, tradition displays an inimitable confusion. The *first* in the list is the father-in-law of Ishmael, while the daughter of the *ninth* is given in marriage to Máadd who flourished about 50 B.C.; so that nine reigns occupy eighteen centuries! *Two* generations later, the last of the dynasty is made coeval with *Fihr Coreish*, who lived about 300 years after Máadd.

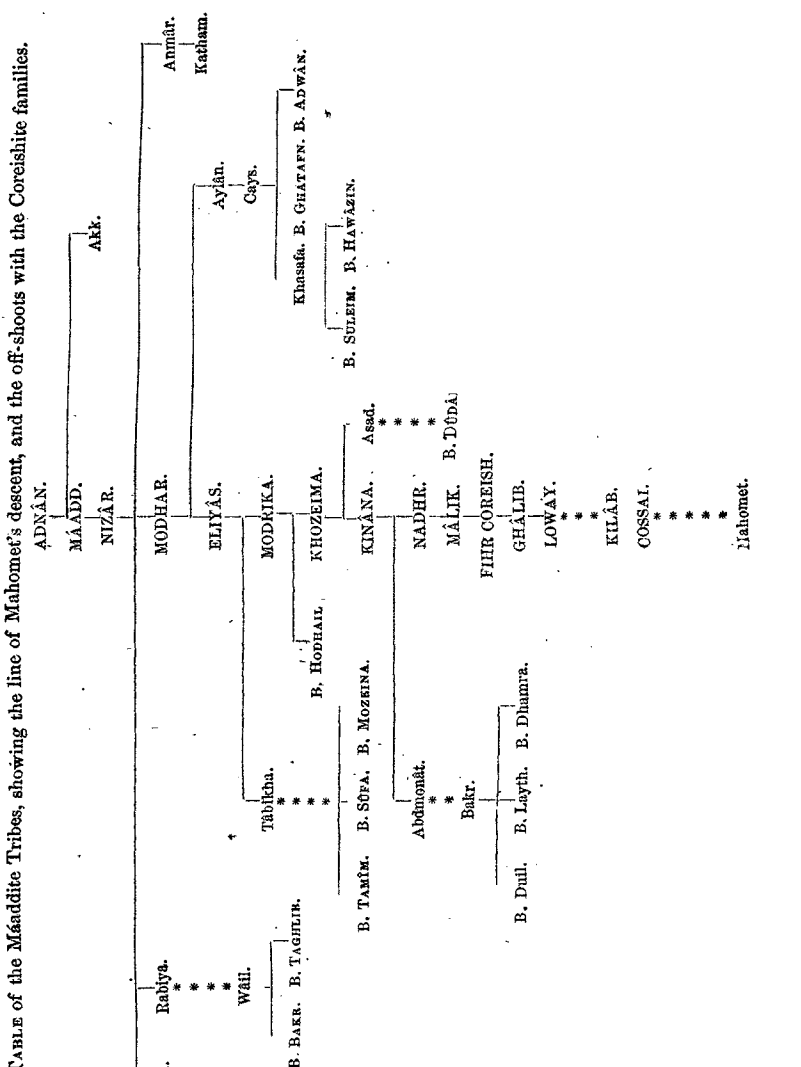
The era of Fihr Coreish (see next page) is probably a clear historical date, and in calculating back therefrom M. C. de Perceval arrives at the conclusion that the *first* Jorhomite prince was coeval with Adnân the *earliest known ancestor* of the Coreish. This is a very satisfactory coincidence, as traditional reminiscence would be likely enough to trace up the ancestral lines, both of the Jorhom and Coreish, to the same period.

§ The names in capitals denote the ancestors of Mahomet.

‖ A tradition in Kâtib al Wâckidi makes Máadd to be coeval with our Saviour, (p. 9.) This is, probably, a matter of calculation, and not of *bonâ fide* tradition: but it is quite possible that Máadd may have been alive when our Saviour was born.

each distinguished by a most prolific progeny, which was destined to play a conspicuous part in various quarters of the peninsula.

TABLE of the Máaddite Tribes, showing the line of Mahomet's descent, and the off-shoots with the Coreishite families.



Of the two last, the posterity spread from Yemen to Irac.* From Rabia sprang several notable tribes, viz. the *Bani Abd al Cays*, who eventually passed over to Bahrein on the Persian Gulph; the *Anaza*,† who to this day overspread Arabia: the *Bani Nâmir ibn Câsit*, who settled in Mesopotamia; and finally the *Bani Bakr* and *Bani Taghlib* sons of Wâil, with their numerous branches, whose wars, famous in the annals of Arabia, will be alluded to hereafter.

Modhar born, 31 B.C. MODHAR had two sons, *Eliyâs*, and *Aylân* the father of *Cays*. From Cays descended the powerful tribes of the *Bani Adwân*, *Ghatafan*, *Suleim*, *Hawazin*, and *Thackîf*.

Eliyâs born, A.D. 2. The descendants of ELIYÂS, who was born about the beginning of the Christian era, are, from their Codhâite mother, termed the *Bani Khindif*; one of them, Tâbikha, was progenitor of the *Bani Mozaina*, and of the *Bani Tamîm*, famous in the history of Najd.

Mudrika born, A.D. 35. Another son of Eliyâs, called MUDRIKA, was the father of *Khozaima* and *Hodzail*. The latter was the ancestor of the *Bani Hodzail*, distinguished in the annals both of war and of poetry, and, as we learn from Burkhardt, still occupying under the same name the environs of Mecca.‡

Khozaima born, A.D. 68. KHOZAIMA begot *Asad* and *Kinâna*. The *Bani Asad* retired to Najd, but were subsequently expelled by Yemen tribes. They eventually returned to the Hejâz, where they bore a prominent part in opposing the arms of Mahomet.

Kinâna born, A.D. 101. KINÂNA had six sons, and each became the chief of a numerous family. Among them was *Abd Monât* the father of Bakr and, through him, of the *Bani Dûil*, *Laith*, and *Dhamra*.§ But the most illustrious of his sons was NADHR, the grandfather of FIHR, surnamed *Coreish*,‖ and the ancestor, at the distance of eight generations, of the famous *Cussai* (born 400 A.D.)

Nadhr born, 134 A.D.

Fihr Coreish born, 200 A.D.

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* See above, p. clxvi.

† These are the *Aeneze* of Burkhardt.

‡ *Travels in Arabia*, vol. i. pp. 63–66.

§ These are termed the *Bani Bakr son of Abd Monât*, to distinguish them from the *Bani Bakr son of Wâil*, noticed above.

‖ NADHR is sometimes styled *Coreish*, but it is more frequently FIHR or his son MALIK to whom the appellation is first accorded. See *Kâtib al*

Up to the era of Nadhr or of his son Mâlik, that is to the end of the second century, the Jorhomites retained their supremacy. About that period the migration of the Bani Azd from Yemen, repeatedly mentioned above,* took place. The horde of Azdite adventurers entered the Hejâz, and settled at Batn Marr, a valley near Mecca. The Jorhomites, jealous of these neighbours, endeavoured to expel them, but were worsted in the attempt. At the same time the Máaddite† tribes (or ancestors of the Coreish,) were engaged in a similar but more successful struggle with a body of Codhâite adventurers, who were endeavouring to establish themselves between Mecca and Tâif. The Codhâites, finding that they could not maintain the contest, retired, as before noticed, towards Syria and Bahrein.‡

Appearance of the Azdites, end of 2nd century.

The Jorhomites unsuccessfully attempt to repel them.

Codhâite immigrants repelled by the Coreish.

Wâckidi, p. 12½; *Tabâri*, p. 40; where a variety of derivations are given for this name. The likeliest is the meaning "*noble;*" but it is also possible that the Coreish, by illustrating what was simply a proper name, may have *conferred* upon the word that meaning. Others say that Nadhr had a guide called by the name, and as his mercantile caravan approached it used to be saluted as the "Caravan of *Coreish*," and thus the appellation was at last given to himself. Again, it is derived from a metaphorical resemblance to *Coreish*, the name of a fish which eats up all others; or to *cursh*, a high-bred camel. Others refer it to a root which signifies *to trade*. *M. C. de Perceval*, vol. i. p. 229.

The Secretary of Wâckidi (p. 12½) has a theory that the name was first given to Cussai, who *gathered together* the descendants of Fihr. Sprenger adopts this notion, and makes Cussai the first real personage in the line, and Fihr a myth: but this seems unnecessary scepticism. *Mohammed*, p. 19; see also traditions in *Tâbari*, pp. 41, 42, in favour of Cussai as the first called by the name Coreish.

* *Vide* pp. clvi. and clxv.

† That is, the *Bani Máadd*, or families descended from Máadd the son of Adnân. The term *Bani* prefixed to any of Mahomet's ancestors, as Bani *Adnân*, Bani *Nizâr*, Bani *Fihr*, is of course extensive in proportion to the remoteness of the name with which it is coupled. Thus the *Bani Modhar* include the branches of Hawâzin and Ghatafân; but do not include those of Bakr and Taghlib: while the *Bani Nizâr* (father of Modhar,) include both. The *Bani Fihr* again (being lower down in the line) include neither, but are confined to the Coreish. In speaking of the ancestry of Mahomet, and the tribes related to him by blood, it is convenient to style them the *Bani Máadd* a comprehensive title including all. The line of descent and affiliated tribes will be best understood by referring to the table below at p. cxcv.

‡ See above, p. clxvi.

The Azdites leave a colony, the Khozâa, at Mecca.

Meanwhile a part of the Azdites (the Bani Ghassân, Aws, and Khazraj) spontaneously quitted Batn Marr and proceeded towards Syria.* Those that were left behind, thence styled the *Bani Khozâa* (the "*remanent*,") settled permanently at Mecca under the command of *Amr* son of *Lohai* and great-grandson of Amr Mozaikia.† With the Khozâa, the Meccan families descended from Bakr son of Abd Monat, and the Bani Iyâd, combined; and falling upon the Jorhomites, slaughtered and expelled them from the country. Modhâd, the last king of the Jorhom dynasty, before his departure, or some time previously, when he foresaw that his people would be overthrown for their flagrant wickedness, buried in the vicinity of the Kaaba, and close to the well Zamzam (by this time probably choked up), his treasures consisting of two gazelles of gold, with swords and suits of armour.‡ These events occurred about 206 A.D.

The Khozâa combine with certain Coreish tribes and expel the Jorhomites, 206 A.D.

The Bani Iyâd unsuccessfully aim at the government, and emigrate to the East.

The Bani Iyâd then contended with the other descendants of Máad for the charge of the Kaaba, now vacated by the Jorhomites; but they were defeated in the struggle, and emigrated towards Irac, where, as has been shown,§ they took part in the establishment of the kingdom of Hîra.

Government of Mecca held by the Khozâa, 207-440 A.D.

But the children of Máadd, the forefathers of the Coreish were destined to be still excluded from the administration of the Kaaba and of Mecca: for, about 207 A.D. the government was seized upon by their allies the Bani Khozâa, whose chief Amr and his

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* See p. clxxxiv.

† One would expect no doubt to exist on the filiation of so important a tribe. Nevertheless, it is held by a few that the Khozâa are of the Máaddite stock. The great body of writers give them the origin assigned in the text, and it is also supported by the following verses of Hassân ibn Thâbit, who thus traces a common origin between his own tribe (the Khazraj of Medîna,) and the Khozâa:—

و لما هبطنا بطن مرّ تخزعت * خزاعه منا فی بطون کراکر *

"And when we sojourned at Batn Marr, the Khozâa with their families, separating from us, remained behind." *M. C. de Perceval*, vol. i. p. 217.

‡ These were the ornaments and armour subsequently dug up by Abd al Muttalib, Mahomet's grandfather, as will be related in the next chapter.

§ *Vide* p. clxvi.

descendants retained it for upwards of two centuries.* Still three important offices were secured by the Máadite tribes;— *First*, the NASÂA or commutation of the holy months, and intercalation of the year, held by a descendant of Kinâna; *Second*, the IJÂZA, or making the signal and arrangements for the departure of the pilgrims from Mount Arafat and Minâ, performed by the *Bani Sûfa*, descendants of Tâbikha and Elyâs; *Third*, the IFÂDHA, or heading the procession from Muzdalifa, enjoyed by the Bani Adwân.†

Three of the offices connected with the Kaaba retained by Maáddite tribes.

Such continued to be the position of parties till the beginning of the fifth century, by which time the Coreish had so greatly advanced in numbers and power as to rival their Khozâaite rulers. It was reserved for CUSSAI (the progenitor of Mahomet at the distance of five generations), to assert the real or imaginary right of his tribe to the guardianship of the Kaaba and the government of Mecca. The outline of his romantic story is as follows:—

The Coreish come to power in the person of Cussai, middle of 5th century.

KILÂB,‡ the fifth in descent from Fihr Coreish, died, leaving two sons, *Zohra* and *Zeid*, the former grown up, the latter, who was born about 400 A.D., yet an infant. His widow married a man

Story of CUSSAI, born A.D. 400.

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* The tale explaining how this happened is at the best doubtful. The Bani Iyâd, as they quitted the country, resolved to do all the mischief they could, by removing the black stone from the Kaaba, and burying it secretly. A female of the Khozâa alone witnessed where it was put, and the Khozâites would consent to its restoration only on condition that the Kaaba was made over to them; with the Kaaba, the temporal power was as usual acquired also.

No such unlikely tale as this is required. The Khozâa were evidently at this period more powerful than the Meccan tribes. They had the chief share in driving out the Jorhomites, and they naturally succeeded to their place as guardians of the Kaaba, and rulers of Mecca. *Cnf. de Sacy, Mém. sur Arabes avant Mahomet*, pp. 66, 67.

† *Vide Tabari*, p. 72; *M. C. de Perceval*, vol. i. pp. 220–240, vol. ii. p. 262; *Sprenger*, p. 6, note ii. and p. 7, note iv. The Nasâa or intercalary system, M. C. de Perceval traces from the beginning of the fifth century, or about thirty years before Cussai's accession to power. The new mode of intercalary calculation might originate then, but not the authority to transpose the months, which was probably of old standing.

‡ Kilab was born A.D. 365, according to M. C. de Perceval's tables. For the Bani Adwan, see p. cxcvi. and farther notices below.

His mother takes him as a child to the Bani Odzra in the desert.

of the Bani Odzra, a Codhâite tribe, and followed him with little Zeid to her new home in the highlands south of Syria, where she gave birth to another son called Rizâh. When Zeid grew up he was named *Cussai*, because of the separation from his father's house; but at last, learning the noble rank of his ancestry, he resolved to return to Mecca, and travelled thither with a company of the Odzra pilgrims. At Mecca he was recognized by his brother Zohra, and at once received into the position which his birth entitled him to hold.*

When grown up he returns to Mecca.

Cussai gains influence and marries the daughter of the Khozâite king.

Cussai was a man of commanding person, and of an energetic and ambitious temper. He was treated with great distinction by

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* *Tabari*, p. 26 *et. seq.*; *Kâtib al Wâckidi*, p. 11½.

Sprenger treats this as a fictitious story, framed to cover Cussai's foreign extraction, and "greedily adopted by Mahometan authors" to save the Ishmaelite lineage of their Prophet, which would have been broken by the admission of an Odzraite adventurer; for such Sprenger believes him really to have been. This view is ingenious, but surrounded with insuperable difficulties.

1. The story of Cussai is evidently not of late growth, but grounded on ancient and pre-Islamitic tradition.

2. Considering the attention given by the Arabs to genealogical details, it is incredible that the tale should have been forced into currency without *some* foundation.

3. Admitting then that the narrative is ancient, and must have some fact to rest upon, it would remain to suppose that Cussai was not the little Zeid taken to the highlands of Syria by Kilâb's widow, but was palmed by her, or by the Bani Odzra, upon the Meccans as such. This however would be highly improbable, for there would be not only the testimony of the widow and of her second husband and of their acquaintance among the Bani Odzra to establish the identity, but also the family recognition of relatives. Zohra, though blind (not necessarily, as supposed by Sprenger, from old age) *recognized his brother's voice.* To those who have noted how personal peculiarities are often handed down from father to son this will not appear impossible, though Sprenger rejects the idea.

4. Cussai had many enemies among the Khozâa the Bani Bakar and the Bani Sûfa; and there were numerous other Coreishite branches aggrieved by his assumption of the Chiefship of Mecca, who would not have failed to seize upon and perpetuate any story of the spuriousness of Cussai's birth. Yet there is not in any quarter the shadow of a traditional suspicion of this nature; because, (as I believe,) Cussai was actually received, on good grounds and by common consent, as the real son of Kilâb.

Zohra and Cussai were both poets.

Holeil the Khozâite King, who gave him his daughter Hobba in marriage, and permitted him, or his wife, to assume the immediate management of the Kaaba, and perhaps some functions attaching to the government of the city. On the death of Holeil, Cussai, who had now four grown up sons and had rapidly advanced to wealth and influence, perceived his opportunity, and, having canvassed among the Coreish for support, bound them together in a secret league. He also wrote to his brother Rizâh to aid him at the ensuing pilgrimage, with an armed band of the Bani Odzra; for even then the Khozâa are said to have outnumbered the Coreish.*

He binds the Coreish in a league to support him.

Cussai first opened these clandestine measures by the sudden and violent assertion of his claim to the Ijâza, or right of dismissing the assembled Arab tribes from Minâ when the ceremonies of the pilgrimage were finished. From remote times it had been the office of the Bani Sûfa (a distant branch collateral with the Coreish) to repress the impatient pilgrims on their return from Arafat; to take the precedence in flinging stones at Minâ; and, having marshalled the order of departure, themselves to lead the dispersing multitudes.

Cussai claims the office of Ijâza, *i.e.* the marshalling and heading the pilgrims as they leave.

On the present occasion the Bani Sûfa, stationed on the eminence of Ackaba in the defile of Mina, were on the point of giving the usual command for breaking up the assembly when Cussai stepped forth and claimed the privilege. It was disputed. Weapons were drawn, and after a sharp encounter, in which Rizâh with 300 of the Bani Odzra rushed to the succour of Cussai, the Sûfa yielded their office with the victory to their opponent.

The Sûfa, after a sharp contest, yield the office to Cussai.

The Khozâa looked on with jealousy at the usurpation of prescriptive right, and began to entertain suspicions that Cussai would seek to snatch from them their own hereditary title to the supremacy over the Hejâz. They prepared to resist, and associated with themselves the Bani Bakr,† their old allies in the expulsion of the Jorhomites. The Coreish rallied round Cussai,

Cussai, supported by the Coreish, fights with the Khozâa.

* *Tabari*, p. 29.

† Descendants of Abd Monât, see p. cxcvi.

who was again supported by Rizâh and his comrades. A second, but more general and bloody action ensued. The field remained uncertain, for the carnage was great on both sides, and the combatants mutually called for a truce, surrendering the decision of their claims into the hands of Amr, an aged sage. The umpire, though of Bani Bakr descent, affirmed the pretensions of Cussai; yielded to him the guardianship of the Kaaba and the government of Mecca; and, still more strongly to mark the justice of his position, decreed the price of blood for all men killed on the side of Cussai, while the dead on the other side were to pass unavenged by fine.*

they submit to arbitration; and the Kaaba, with the government, is awarded to Cussai.

Cussai assumes the government, 440 A.D.

Thus, about the middle of the fifth century (perhaps in 440 A.D.) the command of Mecca passed into the hands of Cussai. The first act of his authority, after the Khozâa and Bani Bakr had evacuated Mecca, and the Odzra allies had taken their leave, was to bring within the valley his kinsmen of Coreish descent, many of whom had previously lived in the surrounding glens and mountains.† The town was laid out anew, and to each

* This is the most generally received account. There are other narratives which it may be interesting to mention, though they more or less contradict that given in the text. *First.* Holeil the Khozâite king openly held that Cussai was the best entitled to succeed him; and therefore left to him by will the inheritance of his power. *Second.* Holeil gave up the care of the Kaaba, with its keys, to his daughter Hobba the wife of Cussai; and appointed a man called Ghubshân (some say he was his son) to assist her. Cussai made him drunk, and purchased from him the command, in exchange for a skin of wine and some camels; but the Khozâa rose up againt Cussai when he began to exercise his privileges, whereupon he sent for aid to his brother Rizâh, &c. The Secretary of Wâckidi says that this occurred at a time when Ghubshân was enraged at the Meccans for withholding the customary cesses at the season of pilgrimage, and that after the bargain just referred to he vacated Mecca in favor of Cussai. A *third* statement is, that the Khozâa were attacked by a deadly pestilence which nearly extirpated them, and that they resolved to evacuate Mecca, selling or otherwise disposing of their houses there. These accounts will be found in *Tabari*, pp. 27–32, and *Kâtib al Wâckidi*, pp. 11½ and 12.

† *Tabari*, p. 29. But some (as the *Bâni Muhârib*, and *Bâni Hârith*, descendants of Fihr Coreish,) still preferred their semi-nomad life *outside* of Mecca, and were thence styled قريش الظواهر, in contra-distinction to the قريش البطاح those of the vale of Mecca. *Kâtib al Wâckidi*, p. 12½.

family was allotted a separate quarter, which they retained with such tenacity that the same partition was still in force in the time of the Mahometan historians. So large an influx of inhabitants, added to the regular distribution of the land, swelled the city far beyond its previous bounds; and the site of the new habitations trenched upon the acacias and brushwood of the valley.* The superstition of the place had invested the trees with so peculiar a sanctity that the people feared to remove them. Cussai, superior to such scruples, seized a hatchet, the Coreish followed his example, and the wilderness was soon cleared. From effecting the re-union of his clan, Cussai was called *Mujammi* or the "Gatherer."† assembles the scattered Coreish and settles them at Mecca.

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* و كان كثير الشجر العضاة و السلم *Kâtib al Wâckidi*, p. 12½. The tradition must be adopted with some hesitation, for the present aspect of Mecca, and the arid and barren character of the soil, do not favour the idea of there ever having been (except under a very different climate), "much wood" كثير الشجر of any description in the vicinity.

† مجمع According to some he was also called *Coreish*. *Vide* note p. cxcvii. But the received doctrine refers that title many generations further back.

Weil conjectures that Cussai was the first called Coreish; and that it was not till after Mahomet's death that the appellation (which the Prophet held to denote the noblest Arabs, and those best entitled to the Government) was extended higher and wider, in order to take in Omar and Abu Bacr, whose collateral branches separated from the main line before Cussai. The limiting of the title to the descendants of Cussai is denounced by the Sunnies as a Shie-ite heresy. Weil looks upon this as strengthening his theory; but I confess the charge of Shia fabrication appears a very likely one. It was the Shias who first endeavoured to limit within narrow bounds the title to the Caliphate, in order to throw suspicion upon the early Caliphs, and upon the whole house of Omeya. Again, supposing the existence of the motive imagined by Weil, why should the clumsy expedient have been adopted of going back to Fihr or Nadhr *several generations earlier* than Káb, the common ancestor both of Mahomet and of the three first Caliphs? It is *possible* (but I think not probable) that the term Coreish was introduced first in the time of Cussai; but even if so, it must have been then used to denominate *the tribes whom he drew together*, and thus the whole of the descendants of Fihr. See *Weil's Mohammed*, p. 4, note iv. This conclusion would correspond with the tradition that, before the time of Cussai, the Coreish were termed the Bani Nadhr. *Kâtib al Wâckidi*, p. 12½.

The town hall. Cussai its President.

The next civic work of Cussai was to build a Council House or Town Hall, called *Dar-al-Nadwa*, near the Kaaba and with its porch opening towards it.* Here all political movements were discussed, and social ceremonies solemnized. In the Town Hall girls first assumed the dress of womanhood, and there marriages were celebrated. From thence all caravans set forth; and thither the traveller, on returning from his journey, first bent his steps.

Liwâ.

When war was resolved upon, it was there that the banner (*Liwâ*) was mounted upon its staff by Cussai himself, or by one of his sons. The assumption of the presidency in the Hall of Council rivetted the authority of Cussai as the Sheikh of Mecca and Governor of the country; "and his ordinances were obeyed and venerated, as people obey and venerate the observances of religion, both before and after his death."†

Other offices assumed by Cussai.

Besides these civil offices, Cussai possessed the chief religious dignities connected with the Meccan worship. The *Hijâba* gave him the keys, and the control of the Kaaba; the *Sicâya* or giving drink to the pilgrims, and the *Rifâda* or providing them with food, were his sole prerogatives, and in the eyes of the generous Arabs invested his name with a peculiar lustre. During the pilgrimage, leathern cisterns were placed at Mecca, at Minâ, and at Arafat;‡ and he stimulated the liberality of the inhabit-

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* He is said also to have *rebuilt* the Kaaba, as the Jorhomites had done before, and to have placed the images Hobal, Isâf, and Nâila in it. See *M. C. de Perceval*, vol. i. p. 249; *Sprenger*, p. 20. But the authority seems doubtful. From his being said to have rebuilt the Kaaba has arisen the idea, adopted by Sprenger, that Cussai founded both the Kaaba and Mecca;—an opinion which appears to me to contradict both probability and tradition.

† *Vide Tabari*, p. 32 *et. seq.*; and *Kâtib al Wâckidi*, p. 12 *et. seq.*

‡ In the palmy days of Islam, stone aqueducts and ponds took the place of this more primitive fashion. *Cnf. Burkhardt's Travels in Arabia*, pp. 59 and 267; and *Ali Bey*, vol. ii. p. 68. The giving of water to the inhabitants of Mecca from wells *without* the town, is stated as the origin of the custom of Sicâya. *M. C. de Perceval*, vol. i. p. 239. The custom however appears rather to have been originally connected with the well Zamzam, the source of the ancient prosperity of Mecca. But according to tradition, we must suppose this famous well to have been now filled up, as Abd al Motallib was the first to re-open it after its long neglect.

ants to subscribe annually an ample fund, which was expended by himself in the gratuitous distribution of food to the pilgrims. He did not assume the minor offices of marshalling the processions on the ceremonial tour to Arafat (though it was ostensibly for one of those offices that he first drew the sword), nor the post of *Nasâ*, the office of commuting the holy months;* but as he was the paramount authority, these duties were no doubt executed in strict subordination to his will. "Thus," writes Tabari, "he maintained the Arabs in the performance of all the prescriptive rites of pilgrimage, because he believed them in his heart to be a religion which it behoved him not to alter."† Providing food and drink for the pilgrims.

The religious observances, thus perpetuated by Cussai, were in substance the same as in the time of Mahomet, and with some modifications the same as we still find practised at the present day. The grand centre of the religion was the Kaaba; to visit which, to kiss the black stone, and to make seven circuits round the sacred edifice, was at all times regarded as a holy privilege. The LESSER pilgrimage (*Omra* or *Hajj al Asghar*), which includes these acts and the rite of hastily passing to and fro seven times between the little hills of Safa and Marwa close by the Kaaba, may be performed with merit at any season of the year, but especially in the sacred month of Rajab which forms a break in the middle of the eight secular months. Before entering the sacred territory, the votary assumes the pilgrim garb (*ihrâm*), and at the conclusion of the ceremonies shaves his head, and pares his nails. Religious observances of the Kaaba. *Omra* or lesser pilgrimage.

The GREATER pilgrimage (*Hajj al Akbar*) involves all the ceremonies of the lesser, but can be performed only in the holy month Dzul Hijja. It requires the additional rite of pilgrimage to Arafat, a small eminence composed of granite rocks in a valley within the mountainous tract ten or twelve miles east of Mecca.‡ *Hajj* or greater pilgrimage.

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* *C. de Perceval*, vol. i. p. 240; *Tabari*, pp. 34 and 72.

† *Tabari*, p. 34.

‡ For descriptions of the hill of Arafat and adjoining plain, see *Burkhardt's Arabia*, p. 266; and *Ali Bey*, vol. ii. p. 67; *Burton's Medina and Mecca*, ch. xxix. The latter gives the distance from Mecca "at six hours' march, or twelve miles," vol. iii. p. 52. But at p. 250 Minâ is described as three miles from Mecca; and at p. 250, Muzdalifa is stated to be about

The pilgrims start from Mecca on the 8th of the month, spend the 9th at Arafat, and the same evening hurry back three or four miles to a spot named Muzdalifa. Next morning they proceed about half way to Meca, and spend at Minâ the two or three succeeding days. Small stones are repeatedly cast by all the pilgrims at certain objects in the Minâ valley, and the pilgrimage is concluded by the sacrifice of a victim.

The sacred environs of Mecca, and the four holy months.

The country for a distance of several miles around Mecca was called *Haram* or inviolable, and from time immemorial had been so regarded. The institution of four sacred months formed also an ancient, perhaps an original, part of the system. During three consecutive months (viz. the last two of one year and the first of the following),* and during the seventh month (Rajab), war was by unanimous consent suspended, hostile feelings were suppressed, and an universal amnesty reigned over Arabia. Pilgrims from every quarter were then free to repair to Mecca; and fairs throughout the country were thronged by those whom merchandize, or the contests of poetry and vainglory brought together.

The luni-solar year of Mecca.

There is reason to suppose that the Meccan year was originally lunar, and so continued till the beginning of the fifth century, when in imitation of the Jews it was turned, by the interjection of a month at the close of every third year (*Nasâ*), into a luni-solar period.† If by this change it was intended to make the

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three miles from Minâ, and Arafat three miles from Muzdalifa. This would make Arafat only nine miles from Mecca. See also vol. ii. p. 362. From ten to twelve miles may be accepted as the fair distance.

* The two last months of the year were (as they are now) *Dzul Cáada* and *Dzul Hijja;* and the first month of the new year, *Moharram.*

† The question has been well discussed by M. C. de Perceval, vol. i. p. 242 *et. seq.;* and in the *Journal Asiatique*, Avril 1843, p. 342, where the same author has given a "*Memoire sur le Calendrier Arabe avant l'islamisme.*" It is assumed that the months (as in other rude nations) were originally purely lunar, that thus the month of pilgrimage came (as it now does in the Moslem calendar) eleven days earlier each succeeding year, and that in thirty-three years, having performed a complete revolution of the seasons, it returned to the same relative position to the solar year with which it started. It is supposed that the inconvenience of providing for the influx of pilgrims at all seasons led to the idea of fixing the month of pilgrimage, when it came round to October or autumn, invariably to that part of the

season of pilgrimage correspond invariably with the autumn, when a supply of food for the vast multitude would be easily procurable, that object was defeated by the remaining imper-

year, by a system of intercalation. Tradition professes to give the series of those who held the post of *Nâsi*, or officer charged with the duty of intercalation. The *first* of these was Sarîr, of a stock related to the Coreish, whose genealogy would make him sixty or seventy years of age at the close of the fourth century; so that (if we trust to this tradition) the origin of intercalation may be placed about the close of the fourth, or early in the fifth, century. M. C. de Perceval calculates the intercalation from 412 A.D. *See the detailed table at the close of his first vol.*

The Arab historians are not agreed upon the nature of the intercalation practised at Mecca. Some say seven months were interposed every nineteen years; others nine months every twenty-four years. But (1) both systems are evidently suppositious, being formed on a calculation of the true solar year; (2) the first of these systems we know to have been introduced by the Jews only about the end of the fourth century, and it is not probable that it would be so immediately adopted at Mecca; and (3) neither system would answer the requirement of bringing the month of pilgrimage in two centuries from Autumn back to Spring, at which season we find it in the time of Mahomet.

Other Arab writers say that the practice was to interpose a month at the close of every third year: and this is the system recognized, apparently on good grounds, by M. C. de Perceval. For (1) it exactly corresponds with the condition just noticed of making the month of pilgrimage retrocede from autumn to spring in two centuries, as is clearly shown in the chronological table attached to his first volume; and it also corresponds with the fact of that month having in 541 A.D. fallen at the summer solstice, when Belisarius on that account refused to let his Syrian allies leave him. *See above*, note § p. clxxviii. (2.) It was the system previously tried by the Jews, who intercalated similarly a month called *Ve-adar* or the second Adar, at the close of every third year; and there is *a priori* every likelihood that the practice was borrowed from the Jews. (3.) The tradition in favor of this system is more likely than the others to be correct, because it does *not* produce an accurate solar cycle, and is not therefore likely to have originated in any astronomical calculation. (4.) Although it eventually changed the months to different seasons from those at which they were originally fixed, yet the change would be so slow that the months might meanwhile readily acquire and retain names derived from the seasons. Such nomenclature probably arose on the months first becoming comparatively fixed, *i.e.* in the beginning of the fifth century, and thus the names *Rabi*, *Jumâda*, *Ramadhân*, signifying respectively *rain and verdure*, the *cessation of rain*, and *heat*, clung by the months long after they had shifted to other seasons.

M. de Sacy's view that intercalation was practised at Medina while a purely lunar calculation prevailed at Mecca, is opposed to the fact that a

fection of the cycle; for the year being still shorter by one day and a fraction than the real year, each recurring season accelerated the time of pilgrimage: so that when, after two centuries, intercalation was prohibited by Mahomet (A.D. 631), the days of pilgrimage had moved from October gradually backward to March.

Commutation of a sacred for a secular month.

Coupled with this, and styled by the same name (*Nasâ*), was the privilege of commuting the last of the three continuous sacred months, for the one succeeding it (*Safar*), in which case Moharram became secular, and Safar sacred. It is probable that this innovation was introduced by Cussai, who wished, by abridging the long three months' cessation of hostilities, to humour the warlike Arabs, as well as to obtain for himself the power of holding Moharram either sacred or secular, as might best suit his purpose.*

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common system of calculation obtained over the whole Peninsula, the time of annual pilgrimage being the same by universal practice. *Mém. sur Arabes avant Mahomet*, pp. 123-143.

An important corollary from M. de Perceval's conclusion is that all calculations up to nearly the close of Mahomet's life must be made in luni-solar years, and not in lunar years, involving a yearly difference of ten or eleven days. It will also explain certain discrepancies in Mahomet's life if we adopt the natural assumption that some historians calculated by the luni-solar year in force during the period of the events under narration, while others adjusted the calculation by the lunar year subsequently adopted. Thus the former would make their prophet to have lived sixty-three or sixty-three and a half years, the latter sixty-five; and we find in effect a variety of tradition precisely to this extent.

* The first who, besides the regular intercalation, also commuted a sacred for a secular month, was according to tradition Hodzeifa, the second successor of Sarir (the first who held the office of intercalator). This serves to bring the origin of the system of *commutation* within the era of Cussai, as supposed by M. C. de Perceval.

Besides exchanging Moharram for Safar (which months are hence sometimes called the "*two Safars*,") some traditions say that the power also existed of commuting the isolated sacred month (Rajab) for the one succeeding it, *i.e.* Shâbân; whence they were called the "*two Shâbâns*." When this was done, it became lawful to war in Mohurram or Rajab; and Safar or Shâbân acquired the sacredness of the months for which they were substituted. *Sprenger*, p. 7; *M. C. de Perceval*, vol. i. p. 249; *Journal Asiatique*, *Avril* 1843, p. 350. I am inclined to think that the system of commutation was an ancient one, more remote probably than that of intercalation; but it had perhaps fallen out of use, and Cussai may have restored it to practice more prominently than before. See above note †, p. ccv.

In reviewing the history of Mecca and its religion, the origin of the temple and worship demands further scrutiny. The Mahometans attribute both to Abraham and Ishmael, and connect a part of their ceremonial with biblical legends; but the traditional narrative I have already shown to be a mere fable, devoid of probability and of consistency.* The following considerations will

Farther enquiry into the origin of the Kaaba and its worship.

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* M. C. de Perceval rejects the Ishmaelite traditions, but still holds them mythically to shadow forth actual facts. Thus, although Nebuchadnezzar's invasion was in 577 B.C., and Adnân, who is said to have been routed by him, could not have lived earlier than 100 B.C., "yet," says he, "this is not a sufficient reason for banishing the legend into the domain of fable. It may contain some traits of real facts, as well as many ancient traditions, modified and arranged in modern times.

"The posterity of Ishmael, vanquished and nearly destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar II., as prophesied by Jeremia, and then long after reviving and multiplying through some branches that escaped the sword, appears to me to be personified under Adnân and Máadd,—names pertaining to a comparatively recent epoch, and employed by anticipation.

"In truth, the distance which separates Máad and Adnân from Nebuchadnezzar, and the breach in the continuity of the chain (between Adnân and Ishmael,) might at first sight make one doubt *whether Adnân were really of Ishmaelite issue.* But opinion is so unanimous with regard to that descent, that not to admit its truth would be an excess of scepticism. The Arabs of the Hejâz and Najd, have always (?) regarded Ishmael as their ancestor. This conviction, the source of their respect for the memory of Abraham, is too general, and too deep, not to repose on a real foundation. In fine, Mahomet, who gloried in his Ishmaelite origin, was never contradicted on that point by his enemies, the Jews.

"I accept then the legend, interpreted in this sense, that at a time more or less posterior to Nebuchadnezzar II., some feeble relics of the race of Ishmael, designated under the collective and anticipative denomination of *Máadd*, and preserved, it may be, amongst the Israelites, appeared in the country of Mecca, occupied then by the Jorhomites:—that in the sequel, Máadd, son of Adnân (not now in the collective, but probably individual sense,) one of the descendants of Ishmael, united himself, by marriage, with the tribe of Jorhom, and became the progenitor of a numerous population, which subsequently covered the Hejáz and Najd.

"Here occurs a singular approximation of two distant events. This establishment of Máadd on the territory of Mecca, and his marriage with the Jorhom princess, are an exact repetition of what is reported of Ishmael his ancestor. *In this double set of facts, Ishmael is undoubtedly a myth; Máad is probably a reality.*" *M. C. de Perceval*, vol. i. p. 183. *Cnf.* also the notes at pp. cxciii. and cxciv. of this chapter.

strengthen the conviction that Mecca and its rites cannot possibly claim any such origin.

No Abrahamic element traceable in the main ceremonies of the Kaaba.

First. There is no trace of anything Abrahamic in the essential elements of the superstition. To kiss the black stone, to make the circuit of the Kaaba, and perform the other observances at Mecca, Arafat, and the vale of Mina, to keep the sacred months, and to hallow the sacred territory, have no conceivable connection with Abraham, or with the ideas and principles which his descendants would be likely to inherit from him. Such rites originated in causes foreign to the country chiefly occupied by the children of Abraham. They were either strictly local, or being connected with the system of idolatry prevailing in the south of the peninsula, were thence imported by the Bani Jorhom, the Catûra, the Azdites, or some other tribe which emigrated from Yemen and settled at Mecca.

Remote antiquity of the Kaaba.

Second. A very high antiquity must be assigned to the main features of the religion of Mecca. Although Herodotus does not refer to the Kaaba, yet he names, as one of the chief Arab divinities ALILAT; and this is strong evidence of the worship, at that early period, of *Allât* the Meccan idol.* He makes likewise a distant allusion to the veneration of the Arabs for stones.†

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* Ὀυνομάζουσι δὲ τὸν μὲν Διόνυσον, Ὀροτάλ. τήν δὲ Ὀυρανίην Ἀλιλατ. *Herod.* iii. 8. The identification generally held between *Orotal* and *Allâhu Taâla*, appears to me too remote and fanciful for adoption; but see *M. C. de Perceval*, vol. i. p. 174; *Rosenmüller's Geog.* vol. iii. p. 294; and *Pococke's Specimen*, p. 110. For Ὀροτάλ there are the various readings Ουροτάλτ, and Ὀροταλτ.

† Σὲβονται δὲ Ἀράβιοι πίστις ἀνθρώπων ὅμοια τοῖσι μάλιστα. ποιεῦνται. δὲ αὐτὰς τρὸπῳ τοιῳδε. τῶν βουλομένων τὰ πιστα ποιέεσθαι, ἄλλος ἀνὴρ ἀμφοτέρων αὐτῶν ἐν μέσῳ ἑστεὼς, λίθῳ ὀξέϊ τὸ ἔσω τῶν χειρῶν παρά τοὺς δακτύλους τοὺς μεγάλους ἐπιτάμνει τῶν ποιευμένων τὰς πίστις, καὶ ἔπειτα λαβὼν ἐκ τοῦ ἱματίου ἑκατερου κροκύδά, ἀλείφει τῳ αἵματι ἐν μέσῳ κειμενους λίθους ἑπτά. τοῦτο δὲ ποίεων, ἐπικαλέει τόν τε Διόνυσον καὶ τὴν Οὐρανίην. *Herod.* iii. 8. Thus the hands of the contracting parties were first cut with a sharp stone, and the blood was then rubbed *upon seven stones* placed in the midst, and at the same time the divinities were invoked. There is here a close blending of the stones with religious worship. The number *seven* is also sacred or mythical at Mecca, being the measure of the circuits round the Kaaba and of the times of running from Marwa to Safa.

Diodorus Siculus, who wrote about half a century before our era, in describing that part of Arabia washed by the Red Sea, uses the following language:—"there is, in this country, a temple greatly revered by all the Arabs."* These words must refer to the holy house of Mecca, for we know of no other which ever commanded the universal homage of Arabia. Early *historical* tradition (for we make of course no account of the legendary and mythical tradition which ascends to Noah, to Adam, and even to remoter periods,) gives no trace of its first construction. Some assert that the Amalekites rebuilt the edifice which they found in ruins, and retained it for a time under their charge.† All agree that it was in existence under the Jorhom dynasty‡ (about the time of the Christian era), and that, having been injured by a flood of rain, it was then repaired. It was again repaired by Cussai.

Wide extent of the worship of the Kaaba;

From time immemorial, tradition represents Mecca as the scene of a yearly pilgrimage from *all* quarters of Arabia:—from Yemen, Hadhramaut, and the shores of the Persian Gulph, from the deserts of Syria, and from the distant environs of Hîra and Mesopotamia. The circuit of its veneration might be described by the radius of a thousand miles, interrupted only by the sea. So extensive an homage must have had its beginnings in an extremely remote age; and a similar antiquity must be ascribed to the essential concomitants of the Meccan worship,—the Kaaba with its black stone, the sacred limits, and the holy months. The origin

* *M. C. de Perceval*, vol. i. p. 174, and authorities there cited.

† See the authorities quoted by Sprenger, p. 15.

‡ That the Bani Jorhom must have had a hand either in the construction or repair of the Kaaba, Zohair in his *Mollaaca* testifies:— فاقسمت بالبيت الذي طاف حوله * رجال بنوه من قريش وجرهم *

"I swear by that house, which is circumambulated by the men of the Coreish and Jorhom, who also built it." *Sir W. Jones*, vol. x. p. 356; *M. C. de Perceval*, vol. iii. p. 532.

It will also be remembered that when the Jorhomites were expelled (about 200 A.D.) the black stone is said to have been secreted by the Bani Iyâd and produced by the Bani Khozâa; according to which tradition, (if it is to be credited,) the worship of the Kaaba and its mysterious stone must then have been of ancient standing. See above, note * p. cxcix.

of a superstition so ancient and universal may naturally be looked for within the peninsula itself, and not in any foreign country.

connected with the systems native to Arabia.

Third. The native systems of Arabia were Sabeanism, Idolatry, and *Stone worship*, all closely connected with the religion of Mecca.

1. Sabeanism

There is reason for believing that Sabeanism, or the worship of the heavenly bodies, was in Arabia, the earliest form of departure from the pure adoration of the deity. The book of Job, many historical notices, and certain early names in the Himyar dynasty, imply the prevalence of the system.* As late as the fourth century, we have seen that sacrifices were offered in Yemen to the sun, moon, and stars.† The seven circuits of the Kaaba were probably emblematical of the revolutions of the planetary bodies; and it is remarkable that a similar rite was practised at other idol fanes in Arabia.‡

2. Idolatry.

Mahomet is related to have said that *Amr son of Lohai* (the first Khozâite king, A.D. 200,) was the earliest who dared to change the pure "religion of Ishmael," and set up idols brought from Syria. This however is a mere Moslem conceit. The practice of idolatry

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* The name of *Abd Shams*, "servant" or "votary of the Sun," occurs in the Himyar dynasty about the eighth century B.C.; and again in the fourth century. One of these is said to have restored *Ayn Shams* or Heliopolis, (*M. C. de Perceval*, vol. i. p. 52); but the tradition probably originated in the name. The stars worshipped by the various tribes are specified by *M. C. de Perceval*, vol. i. p. 349; see also *Pococke's Specimen*, p. 4. Mahomet represents the people of Saba as worshipping the sun in the days of Solomon. *Sura* xxvii. v. 25. *Isâf* and *Nâila*, whose statues were worshipped at Mecca, are said to have been the son and daughter of *Dhib* and *Sohail*, *i.e.* the constellations of the *Wolf* and *Canopus*; and were thus probably connected with the adoration of these heavenly bodies. *M. C. de Perceval*, vol. i. p. 199; see also in *Sale's Preliminary Discourse* a notice of the constellations worshipped by the Arabs, (pp. 19 and 20). In *Sura* liii. 49, is an evident allusion to the adoration of *Al Shira*, or Sirius.

† See above, p. clxi.

‡ *M. C. de Perceval*, vol. i. p. 270; *Hishâmi*, p. 27. "Sharahstany informs us that there was an opinion among the Arabs, that the walking round the Kaaba and other ceremonies, were symbolical of the motion of the planets, and of other astronomical facts." *Sprenger's Mohammad*, p. 6. In a note authority is given for considering the Arabs to be worshippers of the sun, moon, and stars; and the constellations adored by each tribe are specified.

thickly overspread the whole peninsula from a much more remote period. We have authentic records of ancient idolatrous shrines scattered from Yemen to Dûma, and even as far as Hîra, some of them subordinate to the Kaaba and having rites resembling those of Mecca.* A system thus widely diffused and thoroughly organized, cannot but have existed in Arabia long before the time of Amr Ibn Lohai, and may well be regarded as of an indigenous growth.

3. Stone-worship.

The most singular feature in the Fetichism of Arabia was the adoration paid to unshapen stones. The Mahometans hold that the general practice arose out of the Kaaba worship. "The adoration of stones among the Ishmaelites," says Ibn Ishâc, "originated in the practice of carrying a stone from the sacred enclosure of Mecca when they went upon a journey, out of reverence to the Kaaba; and whithersoever they went they set it up and made circuits round about it as to the Kaaba, till at the last they worshipped every goodly stone which they saw, and forgot their religion, and changed the faith of Abraham and Ishmael, and worshipped images."† This tendency to stone-worship was undoubtedly prevalent throughout Arabia; but it is more probable

* *Hishâmi*, p. 27 and 28, where the various shrines and their localities and adherent tribes are enumerated; see also *M. C. de Perceval*, vol. i. pp. 113, 198, 223, 269; and *Sprenger*, p. 78.

For idolatry at *Hîra* consult *M. C. de Perceval*, vol. ii. pp. 99, 100, 132; at *Medîna*, *Kâtib al Wâckidi*, p. 268½, and many subsequent passages; *Hishâmi*, p. 153; and *M. C. de Perceval*, vol. ii. pp. 649 and 688. There was a temple of Monât at Medîna at *Mushallal Cudeid* towards the sea. But it is needless to specify farther.

As to the ceremonies, even the inviolability of the holy territory did not want its counterpart. We read of a *Haram* or sacred temple and enclosure instituted in the fifth century by the Bani Ghatafân *in imitation* of that at Mecca. We have no farther particulars to enable us to judge whether it was a simple imitation, or aspired to any independent origin. It was destroyed by Zohair the Yemen ruler of the B. Taghlib about the middle of that century. *M. C. de Perceval*, vol. ii. p. 263. See also the account of the Kaaba of Najrân formed on the model of that of Mecca. *Ibid.* vol. i. p. 160.

† *Hishâmi*, p. 27; *M. C. de Perceval*, vol. i. p. 197. Hishâmi notices a large stone worshipped by the Bani Malkan, at which they used to sacrifice animals. Compare also the religious ceremony connected with stones, as noticed by *Herodotus* p. ccx. note †.

that it *occasioned* the superstition of the Kaaba with its black stone, than that it took its rise from that superstition.

Supposed history of the rise of Mecca and its religion.

Thus the religion of Mecca, in its essential points, is connected strictly with forms of superstition native to Arabia, and we may naturally conclude that it grew out of them. The process may be thus imagined. Mecca owed its origin and importance to its convenient position, midway between Yemen and Petra. It has been shown above that, from ancient times, the merchandise of the east and south passed through Arabia; and the vale of Mecca lay upon the usual western route. The plentiful supply of water attracted the caravans;* it became a halting place, and then an entrepôt of commerce; a mercantile population with the conveniences of traffic grew up in the vicinity, and eventually a change of carriage took place there, the merchandise being conveyed to the north and to the south on different sets of camels. The carrier's hire, the frontier customs, the dues of protection,† and the profits of direct traffic, added capital to the city which probably rivalled, though in a more simple and primitive style, the opulence and the extent of Petra, Jerash, or Philadelphia.‡

In the second century Maximus Tyrius speaks of the Arabs generally as worshipping a square stone. Αραβιοι σεβουσι μεν, ὁντινα δε ουκ οιδα, το δε αγαλμα εισον. λιθος ην τετραγώνος. *Dissert.* viii.

Gibbon in referring to the subject adds, "these stones were no other than the βαιτυλα of Syria and Greece so renowned in sacred and profane antiquity," chap l. note. If the derivation for this word, *bait-alldh* or "house of god," be correct, it might possibly be found to illustrate and confirm the origin of stone-worship among the Arabs as given by Ibn Ishâc in the text.

* The supply of water is inexhaustible, though not perfectly sweet. The authorities on this subject will be brought together in the following chapter.

† See *Sprenger's Mohammed*, p. 14.

‡ The only remains in the way of buildings at Mecca, besides the Kaaba, consisted of the well Zamzam which, when the city decayed, was neglected and choked up. It was discovered and *cleared out* by Mahomet's grandfather, who recognized the traces of it. Its foundations and masonry must have been of great solidity and excellent structure, and it is no doubt a remnant of the works which adorned Mecca in its primeval prosperity.

There may possibly also have been buildings and a populous settlement in the valley leading to Arafat. This would be the more likely if we were sure that the Minæi of classical writers had any connection with the *Minâ* of this valley. "This basin," says Lieut. Burton, "was doubtless thickly populated in ancient times," vol. iii. p. 248.

The earliest inhabitants were (like the Bani Catûra, Jorhom, and Khozâa, though long anterior to them), natives of Yemen, and the ever flowing traffic maintained a permanent intercourse between them and their mother country. From Yemen no doubt they brought with them, or subsequently received, Sabeanism, Stone worship, and Idolatry. These became connected with the well of Zamzam, the source of their prosperity; and near to it they erected their fane, with its symbolical sabeanism and mysterious black stone. Local rites were superadded; but it was Yemen, the cradle of the Arabs, which furnished the normal elements of the system. The mercantile eminence of Mecca, while it attracted the Bedouins of Central Arabia with their camels by the profits of the carrying trade, by degrees imparted a national character to the local superstition, till at last it became the religion of Arabia. When the southern trade deserted this channel, the mercantile prestige of Mecca vanished and its opulence decayed, but the Kaaba still continued the national temple of the peninsula. The floating population betook themselves to the desert; and the native tribe (the ancestry of the Coreish) were overpowered by such southern immigrants as the Jorhom and Khozâa dynasties; till at last Cussai arose to vindicate the honour, and re-establish the influence, of the house of Mecca.

How is the above theory reconciled with the legend of the Abrahamic origin of the Kaaba?

But according to this theory, how shall we account for the tradition current among the Arabs, that the temple and its rites were indebted for their origin to Abraham and Ishmael? This was no Moslem fiction, but the popular opinion of the Meccans long before the era of Mahomet. Otherwise, it could not have been referred to in the Coran as an acknowledged fact; nor would the names of certain spots around the Kaaba have been connected, as we know them to have been, with Abraham and with Ishmael.*

* Dr. Sprenger attributes the Abrahamic doctrine to the religious enquirers who preceded Mahomet at Mecca, and who sought after spiritual truth both in Christianity and Judaism. But it does not appear in what way such enquiry could *originate* a tradition of this nature.

He adds that these traditions were "neither ancient nor general among the pagan Arabs." But that such traditions were universally received in

Supposed origin of Abrahamic legend in connection with the Kaaba.

The reply to this question has been anticipated in the preceding chapter.* We have there seen reason to believe that the Yemenite Arabs were early and extensively commingled with the Abrahamic tribes, and that a branch descended from Abraham, probably through Ishmael, settled at Mecca, and became allied with the Yemenite race. The Nabatheans, or some other mercantile nation of this stock, attracted to Mecca by its gainful position, brought along with them the Abrahamic legends which intercourse with the Jews had tended to revive and perpetuate. The mingled race of Abraham and of Cahtân required such a modification of the original Meccan religion as would correspond with their double descent. Hence Abrahamic legends were naturally grafted upon the indigenous worship, and rites of sacrifice and other ceremonies were now for the first time introduced, or at any rate now first associated with the memory of Abraham.

Combination of the Abrahamic legend with the local superstition.

The Jews themselves were also largely settled in Northern Arabia, where they acquired a considerable influence. There were extensive colonies about Medîna and Kheibar, in Wadi al Cora, and on the shores of the Ælanitic gulph. They maintained a constant and friendly intercourse with Mecca and the Arab tribes,†

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the time of Mahomet, the names then in use, *Macâm Ibrahim* and *Macâm Ismail*, for spots in the vicinity of the Kaaba, seem most clearly to prove; and, as they could not have gained so general a currency suddenly, the legends must be regarded as of ancient date even in Mahomet's time.

Dr. Sprenger thus argues:—"We find no connexion between the tenets of Moses, and those of the Haramites; and though biblical names are very frequent among the Mussulmans, we do not find one instance of their occurrence among the pagans of the Hejâz before Mohammed," p. 103. But these reasons do not affect my theory: for (1) I hold that the religion of the Kaaba was instituted by the *Pagans themselves*, the Abrahamic tradition being simply super-imposed; and (2) it was super-imposed not by Jews or Israelites, but by Abrahamic tribes of (probably) Ishmaelitic descent, who had a very different class of personal names from that of the Jews, as is evident from Genesis. On the other hand, the affinity of Arabic with Hebrew proves a certain community of origin, and (as has been before shown) renders probable the existence of Abrahamic tradition among the Arabs.

* Chap. ii. p. cxxv.

† The early history of Arabia gives ample proof of this. When Mahomet took Kheibar, he questioned its unfortunate Jewish chiefs as to "the utensils which they used to lend to the people of Mecca." *Kâtib al Wâckidi*,

who looked with respect and veneration upon their religion and their holy books. When once the loose conception of Abraham and Ishmael as the great forefathers of the race on one side, was superimposed upon the Meccan superstition, and had received the stamp of native currency, it will easily be conceived that even purely Jewish tradition would be eagerly welcomed and Jewish legend unscrupulously adopted. By a summary and procrustean adjustment, the story of Palestine became the story of the Hejâz. The precincts of the Kaaba were hallowed as the scene of Hagar's distress, and the sacred well Zamzam as the source of her relief. It was Abraham and Ishmael who built the Meccan Temple, placed in it the black stone, and established for all mankind the pilgrimage to Arafat. In imitation of him it was that stones were flung by the pilgrims at Satan; and sacrifices were offered at Minâ in remembrance of the vicarious sacrifice by Abraham in the stead of his son Ishmael. And thus, although the indigenous rites may have been little if at all altered by the adoption of the Abrahamic legends, they came to be viewed in a totally different

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p. 122. The unbelieving Coreish consulted the Jews whether their own religion was not better than Mahomet's, and were assured that it was. *Hishâmi*, pp. 194 and 285; *Sura* iv. v. 49; and *Sale's note*. Mahomet himself, till after his arrival at Medîna, showed great respect and deference to the Jews, and he professed to follow their Scripture and its doctrine to the end of his life, though he reserved to himself the authority to determine what the true doctrine was.

In the list of Jorhom Kings of Mecca we find, 76–106 A.D. the remarkable name of ABD AL-MASÎH, or "*servant of the Messiah.*" M. C. de Perceval concludes that the title is a Christian one, that its bearer lived therefore after the Christian era, and that Jesus Christ was then *one of the divinities of the Hejâz*. But neither fact seems to me deducible from the name. It is hardly credible that, at so early a period, any Arab Prince assumed that title *as a Christian one*; it is incomparably more probable that it was of Jewish or Abrahamic origin, and was assumed at the time when the expectation of a Messiah was current;—if indeed the name be not a mere traditional fiction. The legend, that the image of Jesus and the Virgin was sculptured on a pillar of the Kaaba, and adored by the Arabs, is not an early or a well supported one, and in itself is improbable. Christianity never found much favour at Mecca and, as I will attempt to show in the concluding chapter of this work, Mahomet was singularly ignorant regarding it.

Vantage ground thus gained by Mahomet.

light, and to be connected in the Arab imagination with something of the sanctity of Abraham the Friend of God.* The gulph between the gross Idolatry of the Arabs and the pure theism of Israel was bridged over. Upon this common ground Mahomet took his stand, and proclaimed to his people a new and a spiritual system, in accents to which all Arabia could respond. The rites of the Kaaba were retained, but stripped by him of every idolatrous tendency; and they still hang, a strange unmeaning shroud, around the living theism of Islam.

SECTION V.

Sketch of the Chief Nomad Tribes in the Centre of the Peninsula.

A rapid glance at the chief tribes in central Arabia, and their relations at the rise of Mahomet, will furnish information which may be of use in the course of this history.

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* It is to this source that we may trace the Arab doctrine of a Supreme Being, to whom their gods and idols were subordinate. The title of *Allah Tââla*, THE MOST HIGH GOD, was commonly used long before Mahomet to designate this conception. But in some tribes, the idea had become so materialized that a portion of their votive offerings was assigned to the Great God, just as a portion was allotted to their idols. *M. C. de Perceval*, vol. i. p. 113; *Sale's Preliminary Discourse*, p. 18. The notion of a Supreme Divinity to be represented by no sensible symbol, is clearly not cognate with any of the indigenous forms of Arab superstition. It was borrowed directly from the Jews, or from some other Abrahamic race among whom contact with the Jews had preserved or revived the knowledge of the "God of Abraham."

Familiarity with the Abrahamic races also introduced the doctrine of the Immortality of the soul, and the Resurrection from the dead; but these were held with many fantastic ideas of Arab growth. Revenge pictured the murdered soul as a bird chirping for retribution against the murderer. A camel was sometimes left to starve at the grave of his master, that he might be ready at the resurrection again to carry him upon his back!

A vast variety of Scriptural language and terminology was also in common use, or at least sufficiently in use to be commonly understood. Faith, Repentance, Heaven and Hell, the Devil and his Angels, the Heavenly Angels, Gabriel the Messenger of the Lord, are a specimen of ideas and ex-

The earliest historical traditions regarding these vast tribes date only from the middle of the fourth century.* Two great parties were then arrayed one against the other;—the Máaddite tribes† (of Meccan or semi-abrahamic origin) on the one hand, and invading tribes from Yemen of the stock of Cahlân on the other. The Bani Madhij,‡ of the latter class, issued at this period from amongst the teeming population of the south, made an incursion upon the Tihâma, and were repulsed by the Máaddite tribes under the command of Amir son of Tzarib. They retired to Najrân, where they finally settled.

Position of the central tribes in the 4th century, A.D.

Amir was elected Ruler (*Hakam*) of the combined Máaddite tribes. He belonged to the branch of ADWÂN which held the office of heading the pilgrim procession in the vale of Muzdalifa. This tribe was powerful and very numerous, but it soon fell into decay.§

Amir ruler of the Máaddite tribes.

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pressions which, acquired from a Jewish source, were either current or ready for adoption. Similarly familiar were the stories of the Fall of Man, the Flood, the destruction of the cities of the plain, &c.—so that there was an extensive substratum of crude ideas and unwrought knowledge or conception bordering upon the domain of the spiritual, ready to the hand of Mahomet.

* *i.e.* six generations, or two hundred years, before the birth of Mahomet. The following details are mainly taken from *M. C. de Perceval*, vol. ii. book vi.

† See pp. cxciv and cxcv.

‡ See table at p. cxlix.; and notice of the B. Hârith, p. cxxviii.

§ For previous notices of this tribe see pp. cxcvi. and cxcix. The uncircumcised males are, at the period in question, given at the extravagant number of from forty to sixty thousand, which would imply a population of from two to four hundred thousand; although Adwân, the progenitor of the tribe, was not born more than two hundred years before. This illustrates the important position that tribes, when on the ascendant, rapidly increased by associating under the same banner and title with themselves other straggling tribes, attracted by the prestige of their power and the hopes of plunder. It is thus that we must account for the extensiveness of the hordes which, in the fifth century, represented the *Bani Bakr*, *Bani Taghlib*, *Bani Hawâzin*, *Bani Ghatafan*, *Bani Sulaim*, &c., none of whose nominal progenitors was born much before 200 A.D.

Where respectable descent was wanting, a good tribe was often adopted; or endeavour was made to fabricate a claim to a good pedigree. See instances in *Kâtib al Wâckidi*, p. 227; *C. de Perceval*, vol. ii. p. 491.

Himyarite kings exercised influence over Central Arabia, 5th century, A.D.

The next notices are about a century later, when the Himyar dynasty is found exercising a species of feudal supremacy over the central tribes. A king of Yemen visited Najd, and received the formal homage of the people.* Ever and anon the wild Bedouins rebelled; but having no head around whom to rally, they always relapsed into vassalage again to Yemen.

Hojr Akil al Morâr chief of the Kinda and Máaddite tribes, 460 or 470 A.D.

A few years afterwards we find Hassân, a Himyar king, giving the command of all the Máaddite tribes into the hand of his uterine brother HOJR *Akil al Morâr*, chief of the Bani Kinda, a powerful tribe of Cahlânite descent, which had migrated northwards and settled in Central Arabia.

The most distinguished of the Máaddite tribes were the descendants of BAKR† and TAGHLIB sons of Wâil, who with their numerous subdivisions, were located in Yemâma, Bahrein, Najd, and the Tihâma. Hojr waged a successful war with Hîra, and conquered from it a part of Bahrein claimed by the Bani Bakr. He enjoyed the title of king, and ruled from 460 to 480 A.D.

AMR *al Macsûr*: 480-495.

To him succeeded his son AMR AL MACSÛR, but he failed in retaining the Máaddite tribes under his authority, which was recognized only by his own race, the Bani Kinda. The claims of Yemen to a feudal tax were pressed by Amr with too great harshness, and twice, upon the plains of Sullân,‡ 481 A.D., and Khazâz, 492 A.D., though supported by the troops of Yemen, he was repulsed by the Arabs.§ Amr al Macsûr was killed in a battle fought against Hârith V.‖ of the Ghassân dynasty.

Burkhardt found the Bani Adwân still inhabiting the country between Jidda and Tâif: they used to muster 1000 matchlocks, but were nearly exterminated by Mahommed Ali Pasha. "They were an ancient and noble tribe," he adds, "unequalled in the Hejâs, and intimate with the Sharîfs of Mecca." *Travels in Arabia*, p. 240; *Burton*, iii. p. 95.

* See note † p. clxi.

† See table at p. cxcv. This tribe must be distinguished from the Bani Bakr, descendants of Abdmonât, who assisted in the expulsion of the Jorhomites from Mecca. See p. cxcviii.

‡ *Sullân* lay to the south of the Hedjâz, and the east of Najd, towards Yamâma.

§ Some verses of Zohair, a poet of the Bani Kalb, and the Himyarite Governor of the Bani Bakr and Taghlib, have been preserved with reference to these actions, in which he himself was engaged.

‖ This prince, it will be remembered, was the son of Mâria Dzul Curtain (Maria of the ear-rings), sister of Amr al Macsûr's mother. See p. clxxxvii.

The Bakr and Taghlib tribes, rejoicing in the independence asserted in these battles by their victorious arms, chose KOLEIB, chief of the Bani Taghlib, to be their ruler.* But Koleib was haughty and overbearing, and he wantonly killed the milch camel of Basûs, a female relative of his wife of Bani Bakr lineage. This and other acts of indignity roused the vengeance of the Bani Bakr, who slew Koleib. The Bani Bakr and Bani Taghlib were now marshalled one against the other; and the struggle, famous in Arab history under the name of the *War of Basûs* (so called after the injured female), long wasted both tribes, and was not finally extinguished for forty years.

Koleib chief of the Bani Bakr and Taghlib, 490-494.

War of *Basûs*.

Meanwhile, weary of the prevailing anarchy, the Máaddite tribes again returned to Himyarite allegiance, and placed themselves under the rule of HÂRITH, son of Amr al Macsûr. This is the Hârith whose invasion of Syria, and temporary conquest of Hîra, have been recounted before.† His strange career was closed by defeat and death about 524 A.D. His sons succeeded him but, by imprudence and disunion, soon divested themselves of their hereditary influence. The Bani Taghlib, as partizans of one brother, vanquished the Bani Bakr, the supporters of another, in the celebrated action of *Kulâb the First*, 526 A.D. To these fatal factions was added the enmity of a foreign foe. The Kinda dynasty was pursued with relentless hate by Mundzir III. of Hîra, in whose breast the injuries inflicted by the invasion of Hârith still rankled. Crushed by misfortune, the illustrious house of Akil al Morâr was soon all but exterminated; and there survived only an insignificant branch, which continued to rule for half a century over a part of Bahrein. The history of this period is enlivened by the romantic tale of IMRUL CAYS, the brother of Hârith, who united in his person the two princely accomplishments of an Arab chieftain, poetry and heroism. In the noble attempt of raising troops to avenge the death of his father Amr al Macsûr, he repaired as a suppliant to every friendly tribe in Arabia; and his checquered career,—now received with distinc-

HÂRITH, prince over both the Kinda and Máaddite tribes, 595-524.

The Kinda dynasty wasted by faction and the enmity of Mundzir, 424-530.

Imrul Cays.

* They awarded him one of the signs of sovereignty, viz., a fourth part of his booty. Mahomet secured a fifth.

† See p. clxxiii.

tion, and heading a victorious band,—again routed, and hunted as a wild beast over the deserts by the enmity of Hîra,—ends at the last in his seeking for succour at the Court of Constantinople. He died on his way back, 540 A.D.; and his touching poem, ranked among the *Moallacât*, contains many beautiful allusions to his melancholy history.*

Sequel of the Bani Kinda.

The chieftainship of the Kinda tribe devolved on a junior branch of the family, which resided in Hadhramaut, and assisted towards the expulsion of the Abyssinians and restoration of the house of Himyar. On the first appearance of Islam, CAYS was chief of the Bani Kinda there, and his son *Al Ashâth*, with the whole clan, joined Mahomet, A.D. 631.†

The Bani Taghlib and Bakr transfer their allegiance from Yemen to Hîra 526-530.

After their defeat, in 526 A.D., the Bani Bakr sought protection under the supremacy of the kings of Hîra. The dynasty of Himyar had now sunk under the invading force of the Abyssinians, (525 A.D.); and the African viceroys, failing to command the respect or obedience which prescriptive right had accorded to the time-honored lineage of Himyar, the tribes of Central Arabia one by one transferred their allegiance to the Court of Hîra. The

* An interesting coincidence may here be observed between Arab history and the Grecian writers. Procopius and Nonnosus mention an embassy to Abyssinia from Justinian, A.D. 531, the object of which was to endeavour, through the Yemenite Viceroy of the Abyssinian king, to reinstate a prince called CAYS, in the command of the *Kindinians* and *Máaddenians*, and give him troops to fight against the Persians. Here we identify Imrul *Cays*, whom the Greeks sought to restore to his Arab chieftainship, and to aid against the Persian vassal the prince of Hîra. Other coincidences of names may be traced in *C. de Perceval*, vol. ii. p. 316.

The Arabs tell us that when Imrul Cays went to Constantinople he left his daughter, arms, &c., with Samuel the Jew in his fort of Ablak near to Tayma, in Northern Arabia. This noble Jew was attacked by the Ghassânide king, Hârith the Lame, who demanded the deposit, and threatened to slay the son of Samuel before him if he refused. The Jew was immovable, and the "*faith* of Samuel" has hence become proverbial among the Arabs.

Arab writers say that the Emperor of Constantinople, jealous at the reports of the intimacy of Imrul Cays with his daughter, gave him a tunic which, like that of Hercules, consumed his body. He died in fact of ulcers. The legend shows to how late a date (540 A.D.) *fiction* mingles with Arabian *history*.

† See *Kâtib al Wâckidi*, p. 64, and *Hishâmi* p. 426; where the embassy is described.

Bani Taghlib soon followed the example of the Bani Bakr (534 A.D.). Peace was at last enforced between the two tribes by Mundzir III., of Hîra. The amnesty was proclaimed at Mecca; a treaty was recorded and signed; and eighty youths of either tribe, to be yearly changed, were sent as hostages to Hîra. The Bani Bakr continued to live about Yamâma and the shores of the Persian Gulph, but the Bani Taghlib migrated to Mesopotamia. It was subsequent to this that Amr III. of Hîra, as before related, was slain by a Taghlibite warrior-poet, Amr ibn Colthum,* for a supposed insult offered to his mother. Thenceforward the Bani Taghlib were the enemies of Hîra, and to escape the vengeance of Amr's successor, they removed to Syria. But on the first spread of Islam, we find them again in Mesopotamia, professing the Christian faith.† In 632 A.D. they attached themselves to the false prophetess Sejâ, and, after a prolonged struggle, submitted to the Moslem yoke. The Bani Bakr, as we have seen,‡ continued faithful to Hîra to the last; and, in 511 A.D., they gloriously avenged the murder by the Persian king of Noman V. in the battle of Dzu Câr, and achieved independence for themselves. A branch of the Bani Bakr, the Bani Hanîfa, had already embraced Christianity, but the whole tribe seems voluntarily to have submitted to Islam during the lifetime of Mahomet.§

Another set of tribes, also descended from Cays Aylan‖ of the

* See above, p. clxxviii. This Amr is famous for his *Moällaca*, or "Suspended poem," which was recited at the fair of Ocâtz. His tribe doted on it; and it used to be repeated even by the children long after his death.

† They sent to Mahomet a deputation, the members of which wore golden crosses. They were allowed to maintain unchanged *their* own profession of Christianity, but not to baptize their children, or bring them up as Christians—a fatal concession!

‡ *Vide* p. clxxxii.

§ Some of the most illustrious of the Arab poets belong to the Bakr and Taghlib tribes, and their poems have rendered famous the war of Basûs and the long train of hostilities which followed. Thus there are ascribed poems of the class MOALLACÂT to *Tarafa*, *Hârith* ibn Hiliza, and *Maimûn* al Ashâ, all of the Bakr tribe, and to *Amr* ibn Colthum of the Bani Taghlib.

‖ The patriarchs, Ghatafân and Hawâzin, were contemporaries of Fihr Coreish (born A.D. 200). Their ancestor Aylân was the grandson of

The Bâni *Ghatafân* and *Khasafa*, with their sub-divisions.

Meccan stock, now demands our attention. They are divided into two great branches, the GHATAFÂN and the KHASAFA, connected, but at some distance, with the Coreish. The chief families of the Ghatafân were the *Bani Dzobiân* and the *Bani Abs:* of the Khasafa, the *Bani Sulaim* (who lived near Mecca, and with whom the infant Mahomet was placed) and the *Hawâzin:* the latter again were subdivided into the *Thackîf*, who inhabited Tâif, and the *Bani Amir* ibn Sássáa. Excepting the Bani Thackîf, they were all of Nomad habits. Their range of pasturage extended over the portions of Najd and its mountain chain adjoining the Hejâz, from Kheibar and Wadi al Cora to the parallel of Mecca.

Hostilities between the Bani Abs and Hawâzin middle of 6th century.

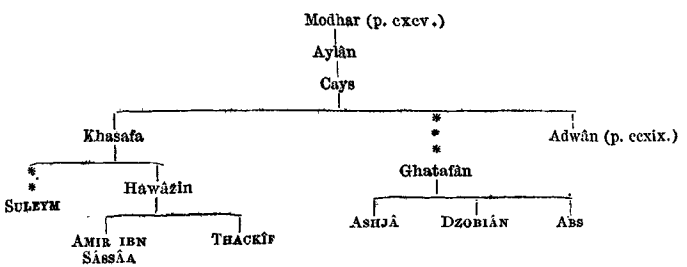
The first notice of these tribes belongs to the middle of the sixth century when, after the fall of the Kinda dynasty, we find the "King" of the Bani Abs in command of the whole of the Hawâzin, as well as of the Ghatafân. He formed an alliance with Nomân IV., of Hîra, who took his daughter in marriage. His eldest son, returning from the convoy of his sister, was murdered, and the marriage presents of Nomân plundered, by a branch of the Hawâzin. Hostilities arose between the two tribes, the Absite "King" was assassinated A.D. 567, and thenceforward the Bani Hawâzin secured their independence.

New strife between the Bani *Abs* and *Dzobiân*.

The Bani Abs were diverted from revenge by a fresh cause of offence in another quarter. Their chief Cays, in a marauding expedition, had plundered a horse of matchless speed, called Dâhis. Hodzeifa, chieftain of the Bani Dzobiân, vaunted his

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Modhar, who was the grandson of Máadd. The following table will render the subsequent details more intelligible.



horse Ghabra as more swift than Dâhis; a wager and match were the result. The Bani Dzobiân, by an ignoble stratagem, checked the speed of Dâhis, and Ghabra first reached the goal. A fierce dispute arose as to the palm of victory, and the disposal of the stakes. Arab pride and jealousy soon kindled into warfare; and such was the origin, 568 A.D., of the disastrous *War of Dâhis*, which for forty years embroiled and wasted the tribes of Ghatafân and Khasafa.* After hostilities had raged for some years with various success, a truce was concluded, and the Bani Abs delivered a number of their children as hostages into the hands of the Bani Dzobiân; but Hodzeifa treacherously slew the innocent pledges, and the war was, A.D. 576, rekindled afresh. In the battle of *Habâa* the Bani Abs were victorious, and Hodzeifa† with his brothers expiated the treachery with their lives. But the bloody revenge of the Absites overshot the mark. So extensive was their slaughter of the Dzobiân chiefs, that the other Ghatafân clans conspired to crush the sanguinary tribe. The Bani Abs, alarmed at the combination, forsook their usual haunts and wandered forth to seek an asylum, which, after being repulsed by many tribes, they found with the Bani Amir ibn Sassâa.

War of *Dâhis*, 568-609.

Meanwhile the Bani Amir had themselves become embroiled in hostilities with an independent tribe, the *Bani Tamîm*, of Meccan origin,‡ who occupied the north-eastern desert of Najd from the confines of Syria to Yemâma; and had vanquished them in the notable battle of *Rahrahân* (578 A.D.) Seeing the union of the Bani Abs and their enemies, the Bani Tamîm formed an alliance with the Bani Dzobiân; and with their new allies, instigated by

Bani Abs supported by the Bani Amir; and the Bani Dzobiân by the Bani Tamîm. 579 A.D.

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* This war is famous in Arab history and poesy, which delight to expatiate on all the attendant circumstances. The detailed account given by M. C. de Perceval is highly illustrative of the fiery pride of Arab chivalry. The history and parentage of the ill-starred Dâhis is traced with a curious minuteness which could be found in few nations but Arabia. The expression أشأم من داحس—*More ill-omened than Dâhis*, became proverbial.

† The only brother who escaped was Hisn, father of Uyeina, chief of the Fezâra (a branch of the B. Dzobiân), who plays a conspicuous part in the time of Mahomet.

‡ See table, p. cxcv.

a common hatred, sought to crush at once the Bani Amir and their refugees. Fearful of the issue of so unequal a combat, the latter retired to a strong mountain called Jabala, where concealed behind a steep and narrow gorge, they awaited the attack. The Bani Tamîm and Dzobiân came blindly forward, their opponents rushed forth, and though inferior in numbers put them completely to rout. Such was the decisive battle of *Sheb Jabala*, fought in 579 A.D.*

Peace between the Bani Abs and Dzobiân. 609 A.D.

The fortunate connexion of the Bani Abs with the Bani Amir continued for many years. At last they became estranged; the Absites separated from their benefactors, and began to long for peace with their brethren the Bani Dzobiân. After many difficulties, and the exhibition by several distinguished chieftains of a magnanimous self-denial and devotion to the public good,† a conclusive peace was effected, A.D. 609; and the war of Dâhis came to an end.

Original enmity between the

The ancient enmity between the stocks of Ghatafân and Khasafa now revived. The Bani Abs and Dzobiân combined with their

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* Amir ibn Tofail, chief of the Bani Amir at the rise of Islam, was born at the very moment of this victory on the rocky crest of Jabala, whither the females had been for safety removed. Mahometan writers place the engagement at an earlier date, some in the year of Mahomet's birth, others as far back as 533 A.D. In refuting this erroneous calculation, M. C. de Perceval lays down the following useful principle. "En général, dans toute l'histoire antéislamique, les Arabes ont exagéré l'antiquité des *faits*, comme la durée de la vie des personnages," vol. ii. p. 484.

† Thus *Zohair* ibn Abu Solma, a contemporary poet of the Mozeina, celebrates the magnanimity of Hârith and Hârim, two Dzobiânite chiefs, who charged themselves with supplying three thousand camels required in payment of the blood shed in this long war. After the negotiations had been interrupted by a perfidious murder, Hârith brought a hundred camels (the price of blood), along with his own son, to the father of the murdered person, and said, *Choose thou between the blood* (of my son), *and the milk* (of the camels). The man chose the camels, and the negotiations went on.

There were many other famous poets during the war of Dâhis; and none more so than the warrior *Antara*, whose feats have been transmitted to modern Arabs in the apocryphal but charming "Romance of Antar." His *Moällaca* is still extant. *Labîd*, the satirist of the Bani Amir stock, and *Nâbigha* Dzobiâni (so styled from his tribe), are also worthy of mention as distinguished poets.

brethren the Bani Ashjâ against the Hawâzin tribes. A standing warfare, marked as usual by assassinations and petty engagements, but distinguished by no general action, was kept up between them, and lasted until it was crushed by the rise of Mahomet.

Bani Abs and Hawâzin revived; eventually crushed by Mahomet.

The following is the sequel of the story of the Bani Tamîm. After the battle of Sheb Jabala, they fell out with their neighbours the Bani Bakr* who, in a year of famine, trespassed on their pastures. Several battles without any important issue were fought between them in 604 A.D. and the following years. In 609 the Persian governor of a neighbouring fortress, to punish the Bani Tamîm for the plunder of a Yemenite caravan, enticed into his castle and slew a great number of their chief men. Thus crippled and disgraced, they retired to Kulâb on the confines of Yemen, where they were attacked by the combined forces of the Bani Kinda, the Bani Hârith of Najrân, and certain Codhâite tribes. Single-handed they repulsed them in a glorious action, called *Kulâb the Second* A.D. 612. Inspirited by this success, they returned to their former country, and renewed hostilities with the Bani Bakr. From 615 to 630 A.D. several battles occurred; but in the latter year both parties sent embassies to Mahomet. The Bani Bakr, meanwhile, foreseeing from the practice of the Prophet that, under the new faith, their mutual enmities would be stifled, resolved upon a last passage of arms with their foes. The battle of *Shaitain*, fought at the close of 630 A.D. was a bloody and fatal one to the Bani Tamîm. They repaired to Mahomet, denounced the Bani Bakr, and implored his maledictions against them. The Prophet declined thus to alienate a hopeful suitor, and shortly after received the allegiance both of the Bani Bakr and of the Bani Tamîm.

ni Tamim.

Warfare with the Bani Bakr. 604-630.

Both tribes submit to Mahomet. 630 A.D.

I have now enumerated the most important bodies of the Bedouins throughout the Peninsula. Two other tribes deserve a separate notice from their profession of Christianity. These are the Bani Tay, and the Bani Hârith, both descended from Cahlân, and collateral therefore with the Bani Kinda.

Two Christian tribes, Bani Tay and Bani Hârith.

* *i.e.* the Bani Bakr ibn Wâil, whom we left at p. ccxxiii.

The *Bani Tay* settle at Tayma in the 3rd century.

The BANI TAY emigrated from Yemen into Najd probably in the third century of our era. Still moving northwards they fixed themselves by the mountains of *Ajâ* and *Salma*, and the town of *Taymà*. The influence of their Jewish neighbours led some to adopt Judaism; others went over to Christianity. The remainder adhered to their ancient paganism, and erected between the two hills a temple to the divinity *Fuls*. Little is known of this tribe till the beginning of the seventh century, when we find its two branches *Ghauth* and *Jadîla* arrayed against each other,

War between the two branches, Ghauth and Jadîla.

on account of the disputed restitution of a camel. After some engagements termed the War of *Fasád*, (or discord), the Jadîla emigrated to the Bani Kalb at Dûma, and thence to Kinnasrîn (Chalcis) in Syria. They sojourned long there; but at last, after the dissensions with their sister tribe had continued five-and-twenty years, peace was restored, and they returned to their

Embrace Islam, 632.

former seat. In 632 A.D. the whole tribe embraced Islam. The two famous chieftains Hâtim Tay, and Zeid al Kheil, belonged to the Bani Ghauth. The former is supposed to have died between 610 and 620 A.D.; the latter embraced Islam, and his name was

Hatim Tay and Zeid al Kheil.

changed by Mahomet from Zeid *al Kheil* (*famous for his horses*,) to Zeid *al Kheir* (*the beneficent*).

The *Bani Hârith* early settle in Najrân.

The BANI HÂRITH were a clan descended from the Cahlânite stock of the *Bani Madhij*.* They must have emigrated from Yemen at a very early date, for they were seated in *Najrân* (between Yemen and Najd), and skirmished with the Azdites, when about 120 A.D. the latter migrated northwards. In the time

Their conversion to Christianity in the 5th century.

of Mahomet we find the Bani Hârith settled in the profession of Christianity. Baronius refers their conversion, but with little probability, to the Mission of Constantius to the Himyar court already noticed, A.D. 343.† The Arabs themselves attribute it to the unwearied labours, and miraculous powers, of a missionary called *Feimiyûn*, and his convert the martyr *Abdallah*.‡ M. C.

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* See p. ccxix. and the genealogical table at p. cxlix.

† See p. clx.

‡ See the story told at length in Hishâmi, where some of the miracles are mentioned, such as the overthrow of a large tree worshipped by the people, pp. 10–13. The martyr, Abdallah ibn Shâmir, is known to the Church

de Perceval, as well as Assemani, believe that Christianity was generally adopted in Najrân about the close of the fifth century. Under the reign of Dzu Nowâs, I have recounted how that cruel prince, in his endeavours to impose Judaism upon the people of this district, perpetrated an inhuman and treacherous massacre of the Christians. Nevertheless, the Bani Hârith stedfastly held to their faith, and were prosperously and peaceably advancing under Episcopal supervision, when Mahomet summoned them to Islam. One of their bishops, *Abul Hâritha*, was in the deputation which was sent A.D. 630 by this tribe to the Prophet. *Coss*, the famous orator, whom the youthful Mahomet heard at the fair of Ocâtz, was likewise a bishop of Najrân.*

SECTION VI.

Medîna.

It remains to conclude this sketch by a notice of YATHREB or MEDÎNA. Yathreb or Medîna.

According to Arab legend, the whole of this part of Arabia belonged originally to the *Amalekites*, in whom we recognize the Abrahamic races of other than Israelitish descent; but it was invaded by the Jews, and Yathreb (so called after the Amalekite chief), passed, like Kheibar and other neighbouring places, into their hands. Wild tales, borrowed from the Jewish Scriptures or Aboriginal and Jewish settlers.

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under the name of Arethas, son of Caleb,—probably his Arab name (Hârith ibn Kâb) before baptism. The king of Najrân resorted to every expedient to kill this convert; he cast him from precipices and plunged him into deep waters. But his life was proof against every attempt, till at last by Abdallah's own direction the king confessed the unity of the Deity; and then a blow inflicted on the martyr's head immediately proved fatal! Others say that Abdallah escaped, and that he was one of the martyrs of Dzu Nowâs. *Cnf. M. C. de Perceval*, vol. i. p. 129; and *Gibbon's Decline and Fall*, end of chap. xlii. note *f*.

* *Sprenger*, p. 38; *M. C. de Perceval*, vol. i. p. 159.

Tradition, profess to explain the cause of the Jewish invasion; the times of Moses, of Joshua, of Samuel, and of David, are by various writers adopted with equal assurance and equal probability.

The student of *history* may be content with a more modern date. The inroads of Nebuchadnezzar, and his sack of Jerusalem; the attack of Pompey sixty-four years before the Christian era, with that of Titus seventy years after it; and the bloody retribution inflicted upon the Jews by Hadrian, 136 A.D., are some of the later causes which we know dispersed the Jews, and drove large numbers into Arabia.* Such fugitive Jews were the Nadhîr, the Coraitza, and the Caynocâa, who, finding Yathreb to be peopled by a weak race of Codhâite and other Bedouin tribes, incapable of offering much resistance, settled there and built for themselves large and fortified houses.†

Settlement of the *Aws* and *Khazraj* at Medîna, A.D. 300.

About the year 300 A.D., a party of wandering emigrants, the Azdite clans of Aws and KHAZRAJ,‡ arrived at Yathreb, and were admitted by alliance to share in the territory. At first weak and inferior to the Jews, they began at length to grow in strength and numbers; and as they encroached upon the rich fields and date plantations of the Jews, disputes and enmity sprang up between them. The new comers, headed by MÂLIK son of Ajlân, chief of the Khazraj, sought and obtained succour from their Syrian brethren, the Bani Ghassân; and having craftily enticed the principal Jewish chiefs into an enclosed tent, massacred them in cold blood. The simple Jews, again beguiled into security by a treacherous peace, attended a feast given by their unprincipled foes; and there a second butchery took place, in which they lost

They treacherously supplant the Jews; close of 5th century.

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* See also the notice of Jewish settlement in Mount Seir which ejected the Amalekites. 1 *Chron.* iv. 42, 43.

† These houses were capable of resisting the attack of troops; they were called *Otûm.*

‡ See pp. clxv and clxxxv. Of the numerous tribes into which they were soon divided, the names of Aws *Monât*, and Taym *Allât*, are significant of the maintenance of the same idolatrous worship as that of the Mâaddite tribes. Mahomet changed their names into *Aws Allah* and *Taym Allah.*

§ See *Kâtib al Wâckidi*, p. 287.

the whole of their chief men. Thus, about the close of the fifth century, the Bani Aws and Khazraj became masters of Yathreb, and ejected the Jews from such of their lands as they chose.

Abu Karib lays siege to Medîna end of 5th or beginning of 6th century.

It was shortly after these events that Yathreb was unexpectedly attacked by a prince called Abu Karib; but whether to punish the Aws and Khazraj for their attack upon the Jews, or for what other cause, is not very apparent.* The invader sent for the four chief personages of the Bani Aws;† and they, expecting to be invested with the command of Yathreb, repaired forthwith to his camp at Ohod,‡ where three were put to death. The fourth escaped to his defenced house, and there defied the efforts of the treacherous prince. This was OHAIHA, who became chief of the Bani Aws, as Mâlik was of the Bani Khazraj. Abu Karib prosecuted his attack, destroyed the date plantations, and brought his archery to bear upon the fortified houses,§ in which the stumps of the

* The poetical remains descriptive of the siege give the invader only the title of *Abu Karib*. Historians and traditionists insist that he is identical with *Abu Karib Tibbân Asad*, King of Yemen, who flourished in the beginning of the third century, or nearly two hundred years before the era of this expedition. From the sketch of the history of Yemen (p. clxii), it is evident that the incursion must have taken place about the reign of Dzu Nowâs; and as he was so bigoted a Jew, its object was perhaps to punish the Aws and Khazraj for their cruel and treacherous attacks upon his co-religionists. This, however, is merely a conjecture; and the only hint given by native authority which at all confirms it is a tradition that Dzu Nowâs embraced Judaism in consequence of a visit to Yathreb.

It is elsewhere said that the *Ghityun*, or head of the Jews, was the cousin and representative of the king whose authority the Hejâz recognized; but who this king can have been does not appear. Procopius mentions an Αβοχαριβος who was at this time master of the northern Hejâz, and offered the sovereignty of it to Justinian. See above, p. clxxxvii. The name and date afford some presumption of identity with the invader of Medîna.

† Among these were "the three Zeids," chiefs of the Awsites, and all called by that name.

‡ He pitched below the hill of Ohod, where he dug a well; but its water did not agree with him. It was long after known as "the Tobba's well." *Vide Journal Asiatique*, Nov. 1838, p. 439. Burton says that the present tradition of Medîna represents this well to be the Bîr Rumah, which lies about three miles N.W. of the town; ii. p. 220.

§ There is a paper worthy of perusal on Ohaiha by M. Perron, in the *Journal Asiatique*, Nov. 1838, p. 443. One of the houses at Medîna so

arrows then shot were visible in the early days of Islam. At last, falling sick, or despairing of success, he made peace with the Aws and Khazraj, and departed. As he left, he made over the provisions and baggage of his camp to a woman who had supplied him with sweet water from Yathreb: she thus became the richest female in her tribe, and (which seems almost incredible) survived until the rise of Islam.*

Enmity between the Aws and Khazraj; beginning of 6th century.

The Bani Aws and Khazraj, thus established in power, did not long remain on terms of mutual amity. The fifth century had hardly expired, when disputes arose on the relative dignity of Ohaiha and Mâlik, and on the amount of blood-fine to be paid for the murder of an adherent of the latter. Battles were fought, and for twenty or thirty years a constant enmity prevailed.† At last the father (according to some the grandfather) of Hassân the poet, being elected umpire, decided in favour of the Awsites,

Conciliation, 520-525 A.D.

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bristled with the arrows then shot into it that it received and retained the name of *Al Ashár*, "the hairy." It belonged to the Bani Adî, and was situated near the spot where Mahomet afterwards built his mosque.

* See *Journal Asiatique*, Nov. 1838, p. 447; and *C. de Perceval*, vol. ii. p. 656. The latter suggests with probability that, instead of the rise of Islam, the *birth* of the Prophet of Islam is meant.

This expedition has been strangely confounded by Mahometan writers with that of Tibbân Asad at the least two centuries earlier; see above, p. civii. Yet the names of the Medîna actors are clearly those of persons who flourished in the sixth century, and the memory and marks of the events were still fresh at the Hegira. The reason assigned for the departure of the invader from Medîna is the same as in that of the ancient invasion, *i.e.*, that two Rabbins informed him that Medîna would be the refuge of the coming Prophet, &c. It is curious that neither the annals of Medîna nor of Mecca throw any satisfactory light on this later invasion; though Abu Karib, if a king of Yemen, must have passed near Mecca to get to Medîna. As the event occurred within three quarters of a century before the birth of Mahomet, the confusion and uncertainty connected with it cannot but affect our confidence in the ancient general history of the Hejâz altogether.

† It was during this period that Ohaiha, who had gained much riches and power by merchandise, planned an attack upon the Bani Najjâr, a Khazraj family to which his wife *Solma* belonged. Solma gave secret intimation to her parents, and Ohaiha found them prepared for his attack. He afterwards divorced her, and then she married Hâshim, and became the great-grandmother of Mahomet. *Kâtib al Wâckidi*, p. 14.

though himself a Khazrajite; and, to prevent farther dispute, paid the disputed portion of the fine.*

The peace thus secured continued for a long series of years. But in 583 A.D., hostilities again broke out. The ostensible cause was the murder of a Khazrajite, or of a Jew under Khazrajite protection. For some time the discord was confined to clubs and lampoons.† In process of time it became more serious. The Bani Khazraj defeated their opponents, slew one of their chiefs *Suweid ibn Sâmit*,‡ and expelled an Awsite tribe from the city. Bloody encounters ensued. Each party looked for succour to the Jews, but they declared for neither; and the Khazrajites, to secure their neutrality, took forty of their children as hostages. Instigated by a rare barbarity, some of the Khazraj chiefs murdered their hostages,§ and thus decided the Jews of the Coreitza and Nadhîr tribes, to side at once with the Bani Aws, and to receive with open arms their expelled tribe. Both sides

Hostilities again break out 583 A.D.

* One of the conditions of this peace was *security of domicile*, which even in war was never to be violated. Every murder within a private enclosure was to bear the usual blood-fine. Mahomet did not much respect this right.

† The mode in which the satirists abused each other was peculiar. Thus Hassân addressed amorous poetry to the sister of his enemy Cays, extolling her beauty; and Cays sang in praise of the daughter of Hassân's wife. A similar practice was one of the charges brought against Kâb, the Jew, who was assassinated by order of Mahomet.

Amr, a Khazrajite, repaired at this period to Hîra, and obtained from that Court (the supremacy of which was now acknowledged in the Hejaz), the title of Prince, in order to put a stop to the discord; but the attempt was unsuccessful.

‡ This man had a conversation with Mahomet at Mecca, when he was urging there publicly the claims of his faith, and is said to have died a Moslem. *Hishâmi*, p. 141; *Tabari*, p. 158; *Kâtib al Wâckidi*, p. 287½. He was killed by a Codhâaite, and his son (who with the murderer, both became Mussulmans,) took the opportunity of revenging his father's death by a blow aimed while both he and his victim were fighting together side by side at Ohod. It was proved, and Mahomet put him to death, as the slayer of a believer, at the gate of the mosque at Coba.

§ Abdallah ibn Obey, afterwards Mahomet's great opponent at Medîna, rejected with horror the proposal to murder his hostages, and persuaded several other chiefs to do likewise. He was dissatisfied with the conduct of his tribe, and took no part in their subsequent proceedings, nor in the battle of Bôâth.

now prepared vigorously for a decisive battle. The Bani Aws sought for aid from the Coreish at Mecca, who declined to war against the Khazrajites;* but they gained reinforcements from two Ghassânite tribes, from the Mozeina,† and from their Jewish allies the Coreitza and Nadhir. The Bani Khazraj were supported by the Joheina,‡ a Codhâite tribe, the Bani Ashjâ, a branch of the Ghatafân, and by the Jewish stock of Caynocâa.

The battle of Bóâth, A.D. 616.

In the year 615 A.D.§ these forces were marshalled against each other, and there was fought the memorable action of Bóâth.‖ At first the Awsites, struck with terror, fled towards the valley of Oraidh.¶ Their chief Hodheir al Ketâib, in indignation and despair, pierced himself and fell.** At this sight the Bani Aws, impelled by shame, returned to the charge and fought with such determination that they dispersed the Khazraj and their allies with great slaughter; and refrained from the carnage only when checked by their cry for mercy. They burned down their date plantations, and were with difficulty restrained from razing to the ground their fortified houses.

Continued ill feeling till the arrival of Mahomet.

The Khazraj were humbled and enfeebled, but not reconciled. No open engagement after this occurred; but numerous assassinations from time to time gave token of the existing ill-blood. Wearied with the dissensions, both parties were about to choose

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* Mahomet took occasion to address this embassy, and pressed upon them the claims of his mission, but with little success.

† See this tribe noticed in *Burkhardt's Travels in Arabia*, p. 458, as living N.E. of Medîna. They were of the Bani Modhar stock, somewhat distant from the Coreish. See table, p. cxcv.

‡ This tribe is also noticed by Burkhardt as still inhabiting the vicinity of Yenbo, and being able to furnish good matchlock men. *Notes on the Bedouins*, p. 229.

§ See *Kâtib al Wâckidi*, p. 296, where the era is given as six years prior to the Hegira.

‖ Bóâth was situated in the possessions of the Bani Coreitza. Burton describes the spot as a depression, "an hour's slow march" to the N.N.E. of Medîna, now called *Al Ghadir*, "the basin;" iii. 3.

¶ This spot is mentioned by Burkhardt as one hour's walk N.E. of Medîna in the direction of Ohod. *Travels*, p. 458.

** *Wâckidi*, p. 296. *Al Ketaib* was an honorary title of supremacy.

Abdallah ibn Obey, the most distinguished of the Bani Khazraj, as their chief or king, when the advent of Mahomet produced an unexpected change in the social relations of Medîna.

Position of the Peninsula with reference to the advent of Mahomet.

The survey which we have thus taken of the peninsula and its border states, will aid us in forming a judgment of the relations in which Arabia stood towards her coming Prophet.

Subdivision and independence of Arab tribes, a formidable obstacle to union.

The first peculiarity which attracts attention is the subdivision of the Arabs into innumerable independent bodies, all governed by the same code of honour and morals, exhibiting the same manners, speaking for the most part the same language, but possessed of no cohesive principle; restless, and generally at war amongst themselves; and, even where united by blood or by interest, ever ready on the most insignificant cause to separate and abandon themselves to an implacable hostility. Thus the retrospect of Arabian history exhibits, like a kaleidoscope, an ever varying scene of atomic combination and repulsion, such as had hitherto rendered abortive every attempt at a general union. The Kinda Government, though backed by the powerful dynasty of Yemen, fell to pieces after a brief duration; and neither the Himyar sovereigns, nor after them the court of Hîra, could effect more than the casual recognition of a general feudal supremacy. The freedom of Arabia from foreign conquest was owing not only to the difficulties of its parched and pathless wilds, but to the endless array of isolated clans, and the absence of any head or chief power which might be made the object of subjugation. The problem had yet to be determined, by what force these tribes could be subdued, or drawn to one common centre; and it was solved by Mahomet, who struck out a political system of his own, universally acceptable because derived from elements common to all Arabia; vigorous, because based upon the energy of a new religious life; rapidly and irrepressibly expansive, because borne forward by the inducements, irresistible to an Arab, of endless war and plunder.

Small prospect of religious reform.

The prospects of Ante-Mahometan Arabia were as unfavourable to the hope of religious reform as of political union or national regeneration. The foundation of Arab faith was a deep-rooted idolatry, which for centuries had stood proof, with no

palpable symptom of decay, against zealous evangelization from Egypt and Syria. Several causes increased the insensibility of Arabia to the Gospel. A broad margin of hostile Judaism neutralized upon the northern frontier the efforts of Christian propagandism, and afforded shelter to the paganism of the centre of the Peninsula. The connexions of the Jews extended far into the interior, and were supported towards the south by the powerful Jewish settlement in Yemen, which was long protected by the Abyssinian government, and at times even sought to proselytize the tribes of Arabia.

Christianity neutralized by Judaism.

But worse than this, the idolatry of Mecca had formed a compromise with Judaism and had admitted enough of its semi-scriptural legends, and perhaps of its tenets also, to steel the national mind against the appeal of Christianity. Idolatry, simple and naked, is comparatively powerless against the attacks of reason and the Gospel; but, joined and aided by some measure of truth, it can maintain its ground against the most urgent efforts of human persuasion. To advance the authority of Abraham for the worship of the Kaaba, and vaunt his precious legacy of divinely inculcated rites, would be a triumphant reply to the invitations either of Judaism or of Christianity. Moreover, the Christianity of the seventh century was itself decrepit and corrupt. It was disabled by contending schisms, and had substituted the puerilities of a debasing superstition, for the pure and expansive faith of the early ages. What could be hoped under these circumstances from such an agent?

Pseudo combination with Judaical legend strengthened the idolatry of Arabia.

The state of Northern Arabia, long the battle-field of Persia and the Empire, was peculiarly unfavourable to Christian effort. Alternately swept by the armies of the Chosroes and of Constantinople, of Hîra and of the Ghassânides, the Syrian frontier presented little opportunity for the advance of peaceful Christianity.

Unsettled frontier to the North unfavourable to the progress of Christianity.

The vagrant habits of the Nomads themselves eluded the stedfast importunity of Missionary endeavour; while their haughty temper and revengeful code equally refused submission to the humble and forgiving precepts of Christian morality. Not that a nominal adhesion to Christianity, as to any other religion, might not be obtained without participation in its spirit or subjection to its

Habits of the Arabs opposed to Christianity.

moral requirements; but such a formal submission could have resulted alone from the political supremacy of a Christian power, not from the spiritual suasion of a religious agency. Let us enquire then what political inducements bore upon Arabia from without.

Political influence of Christianity from without.

To the *North*, we find that Egypt and Syria, representing the Roman Empire, exercised at the best but a remote and foreign influence upon Arabian affairs; and even that limited influence was at this period continually neutralized by the victories and antagonism of Persia. The weight of Constantinople, if ever brought to bear directly upon the affairs of Arabia, was but lightly and transiently felt.* The kingdom of Ghassân, upon the borders of Syria, was indeed at once Arab and Christian, but it yielded to Hîra the palm of supremacy, and never exercised any important bearing on the affairs and policy of Central Arabia.

1. From the *North*.

2. From the *North-east*.

If we turn to the *North-east*, we observe, it is true, that the prospects of Christianity had improved by the conversion of the Court at Hîra with many of its subordinate tribes; and the influence of Hîra permeated Arabia. But Hîra itself was the vassal of Persia; and its native dynasty, lately fallen, had been replaced by a Satrap from the Court of Persia, a strong opponent of Christianity. The relations of Pagan Persia with the Arabs were through the

* The most prominent instance of Roman interference is the alleged appointment of Othmân ibn al Huweirith, as king of Mecca; but the details of this transaction are doubtful if not apocryphal. At any rate, the authority of Othmân was but short-lived. See *Sprenger*, p. 44. There are very few other allusions to Roman influence within Arabia. The Emperor made a treaty with the marauder Hârith, the Kindaite chief; but it was in consequence of his invasion of Syria. See above, p. clxxiii. Hâshim, Mahomet's great-grandfather, concluded a mercantile treaty with the Emperor. *Wâckidi*, p. 13. And there were, no doubt, international arrangements on the border for the security of the commerce and regulation of the customs dues. But these influences hardly crossed the boundary. So also with the Roman legions at Duma the *Equites Saraceni Thamudeni*, referred to at p. cxxxviii. of the previous chapter. Occasionally a refugee, such as Imrul Cays or Mundzir, repaired to the Court of Constantinople; but that Court was never able to turn such events to any profitable account.

channel of Hîra, uninterrupted, intimate, effective, and entirely counter-balanced those of the Christian West.

3. From the *South.*

To the *South*, Christianity had suffered an important loss. The prestige of a Monarchy—though it was but an Abyssinian one—was gone; and in its room there also had arisen a Persian Satrapy, under the shadow of which the ancient Himyar idolatry, and once royal Judaism, flourished apace.* On the *East* there was indeed the Christian kingdom of Abyssinia, but it was divided from Arabia by the Red Sea; and the negro race, even if brought into closer contact, could never have exercised much influence upon the Arab mind.

4. From the *East.*

The Peninsula presented no prospect of any hopeful change.

Thus the Star of Christianity was not in the ascendant: nay, in some respects it was declining. There was no hope of a change from the aid of political supremacy; and, apart from such aid, the presence of an influential Judaism, and almost universal submission to the national idolatry, rendered the conversion of Arabia a doubtful and a distant prospect. During the youth of Mahomet, the aspect of the Peninsula was strongly conservative; perhaps it was never at any period more hopeless.

The writer questions the position that

It is a ready failing of the human mind, after the occurrence of an event, to conclude that the event could not in any other

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* Gibbon thus marks the importance of the fall of the Christian Government of the Abyssinians in Yemen. "This narrative of obscure and remote events is not foreign to the decline and fall of the Roman Empire. If a Christian power had been maintained in Arabia Mahomet must have been crushed in his cradle, and Abyssinia would have prevented a revolution, which has changed the civil and religious state of the world." *Decline and Fall;* close of chap. xlii.

The conclusion here drawn is very doubtful. It is questionable whether Mahomet would not himself have looked to the continuance of a Christian power in Yemen, as a contingency the most favourable to his great scheme. There is no point more remarkable in the character of the Prophet than the adroitness with which he at first represented himself as the adherent and supporter of opposing systems, and by so doing won over their partizans to his own cause. It was thus that he treated the Christians of Arabia, making them believe that he would secure to them their Christianity intact; it was thus he treated, and was welcomed by, the Christian king of Abyssinia; and he would no doubt have played the same game with any Christian government in Yemen. It was not from Christianity, but from idolatry and Judaism, that opposition to Mahomet's system first emanated.

way have occurred. Mahomet arose, and forthwith the Arabs were aroused to a new and a spiritual faith. Hence the conclusion has been drawn that all Arabia was fermenting for the change; that all Arabia was prepared to adopt it; that the Arabs were on the very point of striking out for themselves the ready path to truth, which Mahomet anticipated, but anticipated only by a few years at most.* To us, calmly reviewing the past, every inference from pre-islamite history runs counter to such a deduction. After five centuries of Christian evangelization, we can point to but a sprinkling here and there of Christian converts;—the Bani Hârith of Najrân; the Bani Hanîfa of Yemâma: some of the Bani Tay at Tayma; and hardly any more.† Judaism, vastly more powerful, had exhibited a spasmodic effort of proselytism under Dzu Nowâs; but, as an active and converting agent, the Jewish Faith was no longer operative. In fine, viewed thus in a religious aspect, the surface of Arabia had been now and then gently rippled by the feeble efforts of Christianity; the sterner influences of Judaism had been occasionally visible in a deeper and more troubled current: but the tide of indigenous idolatry and of Ishmaelite superstition, setting from every quarter with an unbroken and unebbing surge towards the Kaaba, gave ample evidence that the faith and worship of Mecca held the Arab mind in a thraldom, rigorous and undisputed.

Arabia was prepared for a change.

It was obstinately fixed in the profession of idolatry.

Yet, even amongst a people thus enthralled, there existed elements which a master mind, seeking the regeneration of Arabia, might work upon. Christianity was well known; living examples of it there were amongst the native tribes; the New Testament was respected, if not reverenced, as a book that claimed to be divine; in most quarters it was easily accessible, and some of its facts and doctrines were admitted without dispute. The tenets of Judaism were even more notorious, and its legends, if not its

Still large material for the religious enquirer, ready prepared by Judaism and Christianity.

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* Dr. Sprenger goes even farther, and supposes that Mahomet was not only borne forward by the irresistible spirit of the age, but was actually *preceded by many of his followers in the discovery and adoption of Islam.* See references above in the note at p. lxix. of the first chapter.

† The Bani Taghlib, and Ghassân, and the Christian tribes near Hîra, were too far removed from Central Arabia to be here taken into account.

sacred writings, were familiar throughout the Peninsula. The worship of Mecca was founded upon patriarchal traditions believed to be common both to Christianity and Judaism. Here then was ground on which the spiritual fulcrum might be planted; here was a wide field already conceded by the enquirer, at least in close connection with the truth, inviting scrutiny and improvement. And, no doubt, many an Arab heart, before Mahomet, responded to the voice, casually heard it may be, of Christianity and of Judaism: many an honest Bedouin spirit confessed of the law that it was just and good: many an aspiring intellect, as the eye travelled over the bespangled expanse of heaven, concluded that the Universe was supported by ONE great being; and in time of need, many an earnest soul accepted with joy the Christian Sacrifice. Coss, Bishop of Najrân, was not the first, nor perhaps the most eloquent and earnest, of Arab preachers, who sought to turn his fellows from the error of their ways, and reasoned with them of Righteousness, Truth, and the Judgment to come.

It was Mahomet who worked the material into shape.

The MATERIAL for a great change was here. But it required to be wrought; and Mahomet was the WORKMAN. The fabric of Islam no more necessarily grew out of the state of Arabia, than a gorgeous texture grows from the slender meshes of silken filament; or the stately ship from unhewn timber of the forest; or the splendid palace from rude masses of quarried rock. Had Mahomet, stern to his early convictions, followed the leading of Jewish and Christian truth, and inculcated upon his fellows their simple doctrine, there would have been a "SAINT MAHOMET"—more likely perhaps a "MAHOMET THE MARTYR"—laying the foundation stone of the Arabian Church. But then (so far as human probabilities and analogy indicate) Arabia would not, certainly in his day, have been convulsed to its centre, or even any considerable portions of it converted. He abandoned his early convictions; for the uncompromising severity of inflexible principle, he substituted the alluring designs of expediency and compromise; and then, with consummate skill, he devised a machinery, by the plastic power and adaptive energy of which, he gradually shaped the broken and disconnected masses of the Arab race into an harmonious whole,—a body politic endowed with life and vigour.

To the Christian, he was as a Christian;—to the Jew he became as a Jew:—to the Meccan idolator, as a reformed worshipper of the Kaaba. And thus, by unparalleled art, and a rare supremacy of mind, he persuaded the whole of Arabia, Pagan, Jew, and Christian, to follow his steps with docile submission.*

Such a process is that of *the workman shaping his material.* It is not that of the material shaping its own form, much less (as some would hold) moulding the workman himself. It was Mahomet that formed Islam: it was not Islam, or any pre-existing moslem spirit, that moulded Mahomet.

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* But it must be remembered that this effect was not attained until every available influence spiritual and temporal had been brought to bear against a ceaseless opposition of twenty years; and that no sooner had the personal influence of the Prophet been removed by death than almost the whole of Arabia rose up in rebellion against Islam. The remark is anticipatory, but it should not be lost sight of in our estimate of ante-mahometan Arabia, and of its preparation for the new faith.

CHAPTER FOURTH.

The Forefathers of Mahomet, and History of Mecca, from the middle of the Fifth Century to the Birth of Mahomet, 570 A.D.

Cossai, Ruler of Mecca; middle of 5th century.

In the fourth section of the foregoing chapter I have endeavoured to give a connected view of the progress of events at Meeca, from the most remote times to the middle of the fifth century. About that period we left Cossai in the possession of all the important dignities of the city, religious and political.

Civil polity based on the habits of the Bedouins.

The social institutions of Mecca did not essentially differ from those of the wandering Bedouins. They were to some extent modified by the requirements of a settled habitation, and the peculiarities of the pilgrimage and local superstition. But the ultimate sanctions of society, and the springs of political movement, were in reality the same at Mecca then (so wonderfully have they survived the corroding effects of time) as exist in the desert at the present day, and have been so graphically pourtrayed by the pen of Burkhardt.

General principles of Bedouin Government.

It must be borne in mind that at Mecca there was not, before the establishment of Islam, any *Government* in the common sense of the term.* No supreme authority existed whose mandate must be put into execution. Each tribe formed a republic governed by opinion; and the opinion of the aggregate tribes, who chanced for the time to be acting together, was the sovereign law. There was no recognized exponent of the popular will; each tribe was free to hold back from that which was clearly decreed by the rest; and no individual was more bound than his collective tribe to a compulsory conformity with the even unanimous resolve of his fellow-citizens. Honour and revenge supplied the place of a more

* See remarks by Sprenger; *Life of Mohammed*, pp. 20, 23.

elaborate system. The former prompted the individual, by the desire of upholding the name and influence of his clan, to a compliance with the general wish; the latter provided for the respect of private right, by the unrelenting pursuit of the injurer. In effect, the will of the majority did form the general rule of action for all,* although there was a continual risk that the minority might separate and assume an independent, if not antagonistic, course. The law of revenge, too, though in such a society perhaps unavoidable, was then, even as it is now, the curse of Arabia. The stain of blood once shed was not easily effaced: its price might be rejected by the heir, and life demanded for life. Retaliation followed retribution: the friends, the family, the clan, the confederated tribes, one by one in a widening circle, identified themselves with the sufferer, and adopted his claims as their own; and thus an insignificant quarrel or unpremeditated blow not unfrequently involved whole tracts of country in a protracted and bloody strife. Still, in a system which provided no magisterial power to interfere with decisive authority in personal disputes, it cannot be doubted that the law of retaliation afforded an important check upon the passions of the stronger; and that acts of violence and injustice were repressed by the fear of retribution from the friends or relatives of the injured party. The benefit of the custom was further increased by the practice of *Patronage* or guardianship. The weak resorted to the strong for protection; and when the word of a chief or powerful man was once pledged to grant it, the pledge was fulfilled with chivalrous scrupulosity.

The offices of the Kaaba and of the pilgrimage conferred a special authority on the Chiefs of Mecca.

At first sight it might appear that, under this system, the chiefs possessed no shadow of authority to execute either their own wishes or those of the people. But in reality their powers, though vague and undefined, were large and effective. Their position always secured for them an important share in forming and giving expression to the public opinion; so that, excepting in rare and unusual cases, they swayed the councils and the

* We meet with few instances of *punishments* inflicted by society upon offenders before Islam. In one case a robber's hands were cut off for the theft of treasure belonging to the Kaaba; and another man was exiled for ten years on suspicion of connivance at the theft. *Tabari*, p. 73.

movements of their tribes. It was chiefly by the influence derived from the local offices attaching to the Kaaba and the pilgrimage that the Sheikhs of Mecca differed from their brethren of the desert, and exercised a more systematic and more permanent rule. It is important, therefore, carefully to trace the history of these offices, which Cossai, with the hope of founding a stable government, concentrated first in his own person, and then in the person of his eldest son. The offices are commonly reckoned five in number:—I. *Sicâya* and *Rifâda;* the exclusive privilege of supplying water and food to the pilgrims. II. *Kiyâda;* the command of the troops in war. III. *Liwâ;* the standard, or right of affixing the banner to the staff, and presenting it to the Standard-bearer. IV. *Hijâba;* the charge of the Kaaba. V. *Dâr al Nadwa;* the presidency in the Hall of Council.*

Enumeration of the offices.

Cossai had four sons, the two most distinguished of whom are called Abd al Dar, and Abd Menâf,† (the latter born about 430 A. D.) The narrative of the patriarch's last days is thus simply told by Wâckidi. In process of time Cossai became old

Cossai makes over the offices to his eldest son Abd al Dar.

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* See *Sprenger's Life of Mohammed*, p. 6; and *M. C. de Perceval*, vol. i. p. 237, *et. seq.* Some make the *Liwâ*, or right of the Standard, to include the *Leadership* also; but we find these offices held separately by different persons. Supposing that they are to be reckoned as one, then the Sicâya and Rifâda might be regarded as two distinct offices, in order to make up the full number of *five*.

It has been already stated that Cossai did not keep in his own hands the lesser ceremonial offices of the pilgrimage, as the *Ifâdha* and *Ijâza*, or right of dismissal and heading the hurried return from Arafat and dismissal of the pilgrims from Mina. But the pilgrimage to Arafat was evidently under his superintendence, as he provided water and food upon the occasion; and we also read that he used to kindle a great fire at Muzdalifa to guide the pilgrims on the night of their return thither from Arafat—"a practice," says Wâckidi "which existed in the time of the Prophet, and the three first Caliphs, and is continued even to the present day." *Kâtib al Wâckidi*, p. 13½.

† Cossai called two of his sons after his gods *Abd Menâf* and *Abd al Ozza;* one after his house, *Abd al Dâr;* and one, who died young, after himself, *Abd al Cossai.* Abd Menâf was named *Al Camr* from his beauty; but it is said that his proper name was Al Mughîra; his mother however dedicated him to Manâf, the greatest idol at Mecca; and so that name prevailed over the other. *Tabari*, pp. 25-26. From Abd al Ozza descended Khadija, Mahomet's first wife.

and infirm. Abd al Dar was the oldest of his sons, but he lacked influence and power; and his brethren raised themselves up against him. Wherefore Cossai resigned all his offices into the hands of his first-born, saying: "Thus wilt thou retain thine authority over thy people, even though they raise themselves up against thee;—let no man enter the Kaaba, unless thou hast opened it unto him; nor let any banner of the Coreish be mounted upon its staff for war, excepting by thine own hands; let no one drink at Mecca, but of the water which thou hast drawn, nor any pilgrim eat therein save of thy food; and let not the Coreish resolve upon any business but in thy Council Hall." So he gave him up the Hall of Council, and the custody of the Holy House, and the giving of drink and of food, that he might unite his brethren unto him. And Cossai died, and was buried in Al Hajûn.*

Abd Menâf a younger brother (born 430 A.D.) enjoys the real power.

Through the careful providence of his father Abd al Dar contrived, notwithstanding his weakness, to retain at least a nominal supremacy. But he enjoyed little influence in comparison with his brother Abd Menâf, on whom the real management of public affairs devolved, and who laid out fresh quarters for the growing population in the city.† Upon the death of Abd al Dar, the whole of the offices of state and religion passed into the hands of his sons; but they all died within a few years after, and his grand-sons, who then inherited the dignities of the family, (500 A. D.), were of too tender years effectually to maintain their rights.

The sons and grandsons of Abd al Dâr (500 A.D.) inherit the offices.

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* *Kâtib al Wâckidi*, p. 12. See also *Tabari*, p. 35. *Al Hajûn* is a hill "near Mecca, which became henceforth the burial-ground of the Qorayshites."—(if indeed it was not so before.) *Sprenger*, p. 26.

† This seems to be the real state of the case, although the accounts differ. Thus Wâckidi says that, after Cossai's death, Abd Menâf succeeded to this position and to the Government of the Coreish. He adds.—

واختط بمكه رباعا بعد الذى كان قصي قطع لقو مه

—"And he divided Mecca into quarters; subsequently to the division which Cussai made for his people."

There is a tradition by Azracki that Cossai himself divided the offices between Abd al Dâr and Abd Menâf, and allotted to the latter the distribution of water and food, and the leadership. But had it been so, the descendants of Abd Menâf would have had no necessity to fight for those offices.

The sons of Abd Menâf conspire against the descendants of Abd al Dar.

Meanwhile the sons of Abd Menâf had grown up, and continued in possession of their father's influence. The chief of them were Al Muttalib, Hâshim, Abd Shams, and Naufal.* These conspired to wrest from the descendants of Abd al Dar the hereditary offices bequeathed by Cossai. Hâshim took the lead, and grounded his claim on the superior dignity of his branch of the family. But the descendants of Abd al Dar, headed by his grandson Amir, refused to cede any of their rights; and an open rupture ensued. The society of Mecca was equally divided between the two factions, one portion of the Coreish siding with the claimants, and the other with the actual possessors of the offices, while but few remained neutral. Both parties swore that they would prosecute their claim, and be faithful among themselves, "so long as there remained in the sea water sufficient to wet a tuft of wool." To add stringency to their oath, Hâshim and his faction filled a dish with aromatic substances and, having placed it close to the Kaaba, put their hands into it as they swore, and rubbed them upon the Holy House. The opposite party similarly dipped their hands into a bowl of blood.†

Two factions, and preparations for civil strife.

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* He had six sons and six daughters. The eldest of the sons was Al Muttalib. *Kâtib al Wâckidi*, pp. 13-14½. The three first mentioned in the text were by one mother, Atika, of the Bani Cays Aylân. Naufal was by a female of the Bani Sássáa. Wâckidi mentions a third wife. M. C. de Perceval makes Abd Shams the eldest son. See also *Tabari*, p. 22.

† Hence the former were were called المطيّبين "the sweet scented," or "those who pledged themselves in perfumes;"—the latter لعقة الدم "the lickers of blood." *Kâtib al Wâckidi*, p. 13½.

Sprenger calls the former party (that of Hâshim) the *Liberals*, the latter (the descendants of Abd Menâf) the *Conservatives*. But on the part of the latter there was no greater conservatism than the natural desire to retain the dignities and power they already possessed: on the part of the former there was no greater liberalism than the assertion of their pretensions to a portion of the dignities and power which they coveted. The *principles* of both were the same. Neither had any intention of effecting a change in the religious or political system of Mecca. Both recognized the existing patriarchal form of the constitution; neither of them had the least thought of adopting a more efficient and enlightened regime. It was a simple struggle for power on the part of two branches of the dominant family. But

The opponents now made ready for a bloody contest; and the ranks were already marshalled within sight of each other when, by an unexpected turn of events, they mutually called for a truce. The conditions proposed were that Hâshim and his party should have the offices of providing food and water for the pilgrims; the descendants of Abd al Dar as hitherto retaining the custody of the Kaaba, the Hall of Council, and the right of raising the Banner. Peace was restored upon these terms.* The offices amicably divided between the two parties.

HÂSHIM,† thus installed in the office of entertaining the pilgrims, fulfilled it with a princely magnificence. He was himself possessed of great riches, and many others of the Coreish had also by trading acquired much wealth. He appealed to them as his grand-father Cossai had done:—"*Ye are the neighbours of God, and the keepers of his house. The pilgrims who come honouring the sanctity of his temple are his guests; and it is meet that ye should entertain them above all other guests. Ye are especially chosen of God and exalted unto this high dignity; wherefore honour his guests and refresh them. For, from distant cities, on their lean and jaded* *Hâshim* born 464 A.D. discharges with splendid liberality the office of providing for the pilgrims.

Sprenger's principle of a spirit of enquiry and advance towards the truth before the time of Mahomet, prepared him to recognize in the family of Abd Menâf the seeds of liberalism, which (as it appears to me) no more existed in them than in the family of Abd al Dar.

* The *Leadership* is not here specified, and the inference might thence be drawn that it followed the right of the *Banner*. But we know from subsequent history, that the leadership actually fell to the lot of Abd Shams son of Abd Menâf, and from him was inherited in regular descent by Omeiya, Harb, and Abu Sofiân. See *Sprenger*, p. 26, note 1.

The three offices retained by the descendants of Abd al Dar remained in that line. The custody of the Kaaba was generously continued by Mahomet to the person in possession at the establishment of Islam, though he had hitherto been one of his opponents. The Hall of Council descended by inheritance to Ikrima, and was sold by him to the Caliph Moâwia, who turned into the Government House.— دار الامارة, —"and so," adds the Secretary of Wâckidi, "it continues in the hands of the Caliphs even unto this day," (p. 13½).

† This is according to M. C. de Perceval's calculations, which I accept as near approximations to fact. Sprenger places Hâshim's birth A. D. 442. *Vide Asiatic Journal*, No. ccxxi. p. 352.

camels, they come unto you fatigued and harassed, with hair dishevelled, and bodies covered with the dust and squalor of the long way. Then invite them hospitably, and furnish them with water in abundance."* Hâshim set the example by a munificent expenditure from his own resources, and the Coreish were forward to contribute every man according to his ability. A fixed cess was also levied upon them all.† Water sufficient for the prodigious assemblage was collected in cisterns close by the Kaaba from the wells of Mecca; and, in temporary reservoirs of leather, at the stations on the route to Arafat. The distribution of food commenced upon the day on which the pilgrims set out for Minâ and Arafat, and continued until the assemblage dispersed. During this period, that is for five or six days,‡ they were entertained with pottage of meat and bread, or of butter and barley, variously prepared, and with the favorite national repast of dates.§

Feeds the people of Mecca in a famine.

Thus Hâshim supported the credit of Mecca. But his name is even more renowned for the splendid charity, by which he relieved the necessities of his fellow-citizens, reduced by a long continued famine to extreme distress.‖ He proceeded to Syria,

* See somewhat similar expressions descriptive of the long journey, in the divine proclamation which Abraham was commanded to make inviting the people to pilgrimage. *Sura* xxii. 28.

† *Kâtib al Wâckidi*, pp. 13–14. The fixed cess is mentioned at 100 Heraclian Mithcals. Sprenger thinks that this may mean the *Aureus* of Constantine, which Gibbon calculates at eleven shillings. The fixed contribution from each would thus exceed fifty pounds. The *richer* of the merchants may possibly have given so much; as it is certain that mercantile projects had begun to revive at Mecca, and especially among the Coreish, and the profits of each expedition are stated to have generally doubled the capital stock employed. As the ostentatious Arabs would expend all they could on the occasion of the annual pilgrimage, the sum specified is not an unlikely one for the more extensive traders. But as a general and uniform cess on each person or head of a family, it appears excessive and improbable. The period alluded to, however, is early in the sixth century, and at that remote era we cannot look for any great certainty of detail in such matters.

‡ The day of starting is called يوم التروية and falls on the 8th of Dzul Hijj. The ceremonies concluded, and the multitude dispersed on the 12th or 13th of the same month. See preceding chap. p. ccvi.

§ The above account is chiefly from *Kâtib al Wâckidi*, p. 14.

‖ On the liability of Mecca still to famine from long drought, see *Burkhardt's Travels in Arabia*, p. 240.

purchased an immense stock of bread, packed it in panniers, and conveyed it upon camels to Mecca. There the provisions were cooked for distribution; the camels were slaughtered and roasted; and the whole divided among the people. Destitution and mourning were suddenly turned into mirth and plenty; and it was, (the historian adds,) "as it were the beginning of new life after the year of scarcity."*

Commercial treaties concluded by Hâshim and his brothers.

The foreign relations of the Coreish were managed solely by the sons of Abd Menâf. With the Roman authorities, and the Ghassânide Prince, Hâshim himself concluded a treaty. He received from the Emperor a rescript authorizing the Coreish to travel to and from Syria in security.† He also secured the friendship of the inhabitants on the road, by promising to carry their goods without hire.‡ His brother Abd Shams made a treaty with the Najâshy, in pursuance of which the Coreish traded to Abyssinia; his other brothers, Naufal and Al Muttalib concluded alliances, the former with the King of Persia who

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* *Kâtib al Wâckidi*, p. 13; *Tabari*, p. 22. It is added by all the Mahometan historians, that this is the origin of the name *Hâshim*, *i.e.* "because he *broke* up the provisions:" هشم الثريد—But this is improbable, for the name of Hâshim was already in existence. The leading opponent of the great Hâshim, in the struggle for the offices of religion and state, was Amr son of *Hâshim*, son of Abd al Dar; so that already there was a cousin styled by the same name. The Arab poets, however, delighted in the pun; and we have fragments of poetry referring to it handed down to us by tradition. Hâshim's proper name is said to have been Amr.

† It is added that as often as he went to Anckira (*Ancyra*), he was admitted into the presence of the Emperor, who honoured and esteemed him; but the legend, no doubt, originated in the desire to glorify this illustrious ancestor of the Prophet. *Kâtib al Wâckidi*, p. 13-14; *Tabari*. p. 23. The former says that both the Caysar and the Najâshy honoured and loved him.

‡ و هو الذى اخذ الحلف لقريش من قيصر لان تختلف آمنة و اما من على الطريق فالفهم على ان تحمل قريش بضاعتهم و لا كرا على اهل الطريق و كتب له قيصر كتابا *Kâtib al Wâckidi*, p. 14. I have endeavoured to give the meaning of this passage in the text.

allowed them to traffic in Irâc and Fars, the latter with the Kings of Himyar, who encouraged their commercial operations in Yemen. Thus the affairs of the Coreish prospered in every direction.*

Mercantile caravans systematically established.

To Hâshim is ascribed the credit of establishing upon a uniform footing the mercantile expeditions of his people, so that every winter a caravan set out regularly for Yemen and Abyssinia, while in the summer a second visited Ghazza, Ancyra, and the other Syrian marts.†

Hâshim challenged by his nephew Omeiya, who is vanquished and exiled.

The success and the glory of Hâshim exposed him to the envy of Omeiya, the son of his brother Abd Shams. Omeiya was opulent, and he expended his riches in a vain attempt to rival the splendour of his uncle's munificence. The Coreish perceived the endeavour, and turned it into ridicule. Omeiya was enraged. *Who*, said he, *is Hâshim?* and he defied him to a trial of superiority.‡ Hâshim would willingly have avoided a contest with one so much his inferior both in years and in dignity; but the Coreish, who loved such exhibitions, would not excuse him; he consented, therefore, but with the stipulation that the vanquished party should lose fifty black-eyed camels, and be ten years exiled from Mecca. A Khozâite soothsayer was appointed umpire; and, having heard the pretensions of both, pronounced Hâshim to be the victor. Hâshim then took the fifty camels, slaughtered them in the vale of Mecca, and fed with them all the people who were present. Omeiya set out for Syria, and remained there the full period of his exile. The circumstance is carefully and superstitiously noted by Mahometan writers as the first trace of that rivalry between the *Hâshimite* and *Omeyad* factions, which in after ages shook the Caliphate.§

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* *Tabari*, p. 23.

† *Kâtib al Wâckidi*, p. 13; *Tabari*, p. 22.

‡ It is difficult to express, in any language but the Arabic, the idea conveyed by مناذرة It was a vain-glorious practice of the Arabs, which consisted in one party challenging another, and claiming to be more noble and renowned, brave and generous, than he. Each disputant adduced facts and witnesses to prove his ambitious pretensions, and the arbiter judged accordingly.

§ *Kâtib al Wâckidi*, p. 13½; *Tabari*, p. 24. The Mahometan historians say that " This was the beginning of the enmity between Hâshim and

Hâshim was now advanced in years when, on a mercantile journey to the north, he visited Medîna with a party of the Coreish. As he traded there in the "*Nabathean** market," he was attracted by the graceful figure of a female who from an elevated position was directing her people how to buy and sell for her. She was discreet, and withal comely, and made a tender impression upon the heart of Hâshim. He enquired of the citizens whether she was married or single; and they answered that she had been married to Oheiha, and had borne him two sons, but that he had divorced her. The dignity of the lady, they added, was so great amongst her people that she would not marry, unless it were stipulated that she should remain mistress of her own concerns and have at pleasure the power of divorce. This was SALMA daughter of Amr, a Khazrajite of the Bani Najjâr.† Hâshim meets *Salmâ* at Medina;

Hâshim thereupon demanded her in marriage; and she consented, for she was well aware of his renown and noble birth. So he married her; and made a great feast to the Coreish, of whom forty were present with the caravan. He also invited some of the Khazrajites. After a few days' rest, the caravan proceeded onwards to Syria; and, on his return southwards, Hâshim carried and marries her.

Omeya," meaning between the Omeyads and Abbassides. Mysteriously to illustrate this predestined enmity, it is pretended that Hâshim and Abd Shams (Omeya's father) were twins; that the first born came forth with his finger adhering to the forehead of his fellow; and that on being severed, blood flowed from the wound. The soothsayers were consulted, and said that there would be bloodshed between them or their descendants. *Tabari*, p. 23. The Secretary of Wâckidi does not give this legend. It is an evident Abasside fable.

The envy of Omeya, and the rivalry between the branches of Hâshim and Abd Shams, need no such recondite illustration. It was the natural result of the retention of power and office by one of two collateral lines. The Hâshimites had the chief dignities of providing water and food for the pilgrims. The Omeyads possessed only the leadership in battle. What more natural than that the latter should envy the former?

* That one of the marts at Medîna should have been then currently called by this name is proof that the Nabatheans must have had extensive mercantile dealings so far south as Medîna. This corresponds with the conclusions arrived at in chap. ii. p. cxxv.

† Mention has already been made in the preceding chapter (p. ccxxxii.) of Oheiha, and also of Salma.

She bears him Sheba (*Abd al Muttalib*) A.D. 497.

his bride with him to Mecca. As the days of her pregnancy advanced, she retired to her father's house at Medîna, and there brought forth a son who, because much white hair covered his infantile head, was called *Shêba* al Hamd.* Not long after, Hâshim made another expedition to the north, and while at Ghazza (*Gaza*) sickened and died. The event occurred early in the sixth century.†

Al Muttalib fetches his

Hâshim left his dignities to Al Muttalib,‡ his elder brother,

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* *Kâtib al Wâckidi*, p. 14; *Tabari*, p. 15. The account of the latter varies somewhat from the Secretary of Wâckidi. Tabari makes Hâshim on his visit to Medîna to abide in the house of Amr, Salma's father, where he saw and fell in love with the comely widow. She made the stipulation that she was not to bring forth a child except in her father's house. Hâshim, after contracting the alliance, proceeded on his journey to Syria, and the marriage was not consummated till his return, when he carried Salma to Mecca. These facts, and the birth of Shêba *at Medîna*, are not mentioned by the Secretary.

Hâshim's death could not have occurred very immediately after the birth of Shêba, as he is said to have had another child by Salma, a daughter called Ruckeya who died in infancy; but it is *possible* she may have been born before Shêba. Hâshim had another daughter of the same name by another wife. He appears to have had in all five wives, by whom four sons and five daughters were born to him. *Kâtib al Wâckidi, ibidem.* But the only child of any note was Shêba, Abd al Muttalib.

Hâshim was probably between fifty and sixty when he died. Sprenger has satisfactorily shown that the absurd tradition of his being at his death only twenty or twenty-five years old, originated in a corrupt copy of a tradition in Wâckidi, where it is stated that *Abu Ruhm*, who carried back the property left by Hâshim at Gaza to his family at Mecca, was then only twenty years old.

Sprenger, however, seems to me wrong in attributing the name of "Shêba" to *Hâshim's* being grey-headed when Salma bore him a son. The view taken in the text is that of native authority, and is besides the most natural.

† M. C. de Perceval considers that Hâshim died A.D. 510, and supposes Shêba to have been then thirteen years old (having been born A. D. 497.) But Tabari makes the lad only seven or eight years of age when, some time later, he quitted Medîna, (p. 15). Hâshim may therefore have died earlier.

I follow M. C. de Perceval in placing Shêba (Abd al Muttalib's) birth in 497 A. D. He died aged eighty-two, in 579 A.D. Sprenger, by *lunar* years, brings the calculation of his birth to 500 A.D., but the luni-solar system of M. C. de Perceval is to be preferred.

‡ Al Muttalib and Hâshim, and their descendants, combined and kept together on the one side; as did Abd Shams and Naufal, and their descendants, on the other. Each body, the Secretary of Wâckidi adds, in all their proceedings acted "as one hand."

who conducted the entertainment of the pilgrims in so splendid a style as to deserve the epithet *Al Faidh*, "the Munificent." Meanwhile, his little nephew Shêba was growing up, under the care of his widowed mother, at Medîna. Several years after his brother's death, Al Muttalib chanced to meet a traveller from Medîna, who described in glowing terms the noble bearing of the young Meccan. Al Muttalib's heart smote him because he had so long left his brother's son in that distant locality, and he set out forthwith to bring him to Mecca. Arrived at Medîna, he enquired for the lad, and found him practising archery among the boys of the city. He knew him at once from his likeness to his father, embraced and wept over him, and clothed him in a suit of Yemen raiment. His mother sent to invite Al Muttalib to her house, but he refused to untie a knot of his camel's accoutrements until he had carried off the lad to Mecca. Salma was taken by surprise at the proposal, and passionate in her grief; but Al Muttalib reasoned with her, and explained the great advantages her son was losing by absence from his father's house. Seeing him determined, she at last relented. Thus, after Al Muttalib had sojourned with her three days, he set out with his nephew upon his journey homewards. He reached Mecca during the heat of the day. As the inhabitants, sitting in the shade of their houses, saw him pass with a lad by his side, they concluded that he had purchased a slave, and exclaimed *Abd Al Muttalib!*—"lo, the servant of Al Muttalib!" "Out upon you," said he; "it is my nephew, Shêba, the son of Amr (Hâshim.)" And as each scrutinized the features of the boy, they swore—"By my life! it is the very same." In this incident is said to have originated the name of ABD AL MUTTALIB, by which the son of Hâshim was ever after called.*

nephew from Medina.

Origin of the name *Abd al Muttalib.*

* *Kâtib al Wâckidi*, pp. 14–15; *Tabari*, pp. 15–17. The accounts vary considerably. The former makes Thâbit, father of the Poet Hassân, to bring to Abd al Muttalib the tidings of his nephew; the latter makes a Meccan of the Bani al Hârith to do so. Tabari also varies (p. 16) in representing Al Muttalib as carrying off his nephew clandestinely, and thus omits the interview with Salma; but at p. 17 he gives another account more like Wâckidi's. He also makes Al Muttalib at first represent his nephew at Mecca to be *really* his slave, and then surprise the Coreish by leading him about the streets of Mecca well dressed, and proclaiming that he was Hâshim's son.

Abd al Muttalib obtains possession of his paternal estate through aid of his maternal relatives from Medîna.

Al Muttalib proceeded in due time to instal his nephew in the possession of his father's property; but Naufal, another uncle, interposed, and violently deprived him of the paternal estate. Abd al Muttalib (who appears now to have reached the years of discretion) appealed to his tribe to aid him in resisting the usurpation of his rights; but they declined to interfere. He then wrote to his maternal relatives at Medîna, who no sooner received the intelligence than eighty mounted men of the Bani Najjâr, with Abu Asád at their head, started for Mecca. Abd al Muttalib went forth to meet them, and invited them to his house; but Abu Asád refused to alight until he had called Naufal to account. He proceeded straightway to the yard of the Holy House, and found him seated there among the chiefs of the Coreish. Naufal arose to offer welcome; but the stranger refused his welcome, and drawing his sword sternly declared that he would plunge it within him unless he forthwith reinstated the orphan in his rights. The oppressor was daunted, and agreed to the concession, which was ratified by oath before the assembled Coreish.*

There seems some reason to doubt the origin to which the name of Abd al Muttalib is attributed. But as it is universally received by Mahometan writers, I have thought it best to adopt it in the text. There is a good deal of fragmentary poetry on the subject. The following lines describe Al Muttalib's emotion when he recognized his nephew at Medîna:—

* عرفت شيبه والنحّار قد † حلفت * ابناوها حوله بالنبل تنتضل

* عرفت اجلده مّنا شيـــمته ففاض مني عليه وابل ســـيل

Kâtib al Wâckidi, p. 14.

* See *Tabari*, pp. 17–21. These incidents are not given by Wâckidi; and there is ground for suspecting at the least exaggeration in them, from the Abbasside desire of casting disrepute upon the Omeyad branch.

Abd al Muttalib being represented as himself assertor of his rights, and as sending a message to his Medîna relatives (which is given by Tabari as a poetical fragment, p. 20), we must regard him as now grown up. But I do not see any ground for holding the rights of which he was dispossessed to be those of entertaining the pilgrims, as Sprenger supposes. *Life of Mohammed*, p. 30. In that case we should have to consider his uncle, Al Muttalib, as dead, which from the narrative does not appear likely. The whole

† Various read جعلت

Some years after, Al Muttalib died on a mercantile journey to Yemen;* and then Abd al Muttalib succeeded to the office of entertaining the pilgrims. But for a long time he was destitute of power and influence; and having but one son to assist him in the assertion of his claims, he found it difficult to cope with the opposing faction of the Coreish. It was during this period that he discovered the ancient well of Zamzam. Finding it laborious to procure water from the scattered wells of Mecca, and store it in cisterns by the Kaaba, and perhaps aware by tradition of the existence of a well in the vicinity, he made diligent search, and at last came upon the circle of its venerable masonry.† It was a remnant of the palmy days of Mecca, when a rich and incessant stream of commerce flowed in this direction. Centuries had elapsed since the trade had ceased, and with it followed the desertion of Mecca, and the neglect of the well. It was choked up either accidentally or by design, and the remembrance of it was so indistinct that the site even was now unknown. Mecca had again

Abd al Muttalib succeeds to the office of providing for the pilgrims.

He discovers the ancient well Zamzam.

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story, however, may be regarded, for the reason specified above, with some degree of doubt.

* Tradition states that Hâshim was the first of Abd Menâf's sons that died; then Abd Shams in Mecca, where he was buried, at Ajyâd; then Al Muttalib as above; and lastly, Naufal at Salmân in Irâc. See *Tabari*, p. 25.

† *Hishâmi*, p. 21; *Kâtib al Wâckidi*, p. 15. The event is encircled by a halo of miraculous associations. Abd al Muttalib receives in a vision the heavenly behest to dig for the well, couched in enigmatical phrases, which after several repetitions he at last comprehends. The Coreish assemble to watch his labours: his pick-axe strikes upon the ancient masonry, and he utters a loud *Takbîr* (Allâhu Akbar,—*Great is the Lord!*) The Coreish then insist on being associated with him in the possession of the well. Abd al Muttalib resists the claim, which they agree to refer to a female soothsayer in the highlands of Syria. On their journey thither, their water is expended in a wild desert where no springs are to be found. They prepare to dig graves for themselves and await death, when lo! the camel of Abd al Muttalib strikes her hoof on the ground, and a fountain straightway gushes forth. The Coreish, with a flood of thanksgiving, acknowledge that God had by this miracle shown that the well Zamzam belonged solely to Abd al Muttalib, and they all return in peace to Mecca. The dispute about the gazelles and other property is represented as following the above incident. After an absurd story of this sort, what reliance is to be placed on the Secretary's judgment or common sense? Sprenger has rightly thrown the whole of these fables into his legendary chapter. *Life of Mohammed*, p. 58.

risen to a comparatively prosperous state, and the discovery of the ancient well was an auspicious token of still increasing advancement.

Claim of the Coreish negatived by the oracle of the Kaaba.

As Abd al Muttalib, aided by his son Hârith, dug deeper and deeper, he came upon the two golden gazelles, with the swords and suits of armour buried there by the Jorhomite king more than three centuries before. The rest of the Coreish envied him these treasures, and demanded a share in them. They asserted their right also to the well itself, which they declared had been possessed by their common ancestor Ishmael. Abd al Muttalib was not powerful enough to resist the oppressive claim; but he agreed to refer their several pretensions to the decision of the arrows of HOBAL, the god whose image was within the Kaaba.* Lots were cast for the Kaaba and for the respective claimants. The gazelles fell to the share of the Kaaba, and the swords and suits of armour to Abd al Muttalib, while the arrows of the Coreish were blank.† The Coreish acquiesced in the divine decision, and relinquished their pretensions to the well. Abd al Muttalib beat out the gazelles into plates of gold, and fixed them by way of ornament to the door of the Kaaba.‡ He hung up the

* The image of Hobal was over the well or hollow within the Kaaba. In this cavity were preserved the offerings and other treasures of the temple. *Tabari*, p. 6.

† The Kâtib al Wâckidi is the only authority who states the number of the weapons, viz., *seven swords*, and *five* suits of armour, p. 15. The story of their being buried here by Modhâd, the last Jorhomite king, has been related in preceding chap. p. cxcviii.

In casting the lots on this occasion, six arrows were used; two yellow for the Kaaba; two black for Abd al Muttalib; and two white for the Coreish. *Hishâmi*, p. 23. The mode of casting the arrows is described by Tabari (p. 6), and by M. C. de Perceval, *Essai*, vol. i. pp. 261-265. There were ordinarily seven arrows on which fixed responses were written, from which some sort of oracle could be gathered in any matter, domestic, social, or political, referred to the god;—whether in digging for water, circumcising a lad, fixing his paternity, taking a wife, going to war, concluding a treaty, &c. The lots were cast into a bag, and drawn by the minister of the Temple. In the present case, there was a separate drawing apparently for each article, or set of articles, the arrow first drawn gaining the lot.

‡ These were soon after stolen by three Coreishites, but recovered. *Kâtib al Wâckidi*, p. 15½; Tabari (p. 73) gives an account of a sacrilegious theft which is probably the same. As a punishment, the chief offender had his hands cut off, and one of the Coreish was expatriated for ten years.

swords before the door as a protection to the treasures within; but at the same time added a more effectual guard in the shape of a lock and key, which (is is said) were made of gold.

Zam Zam gives forth an abundant spring.

The plentiful flow of fresh water, soon apparent in the well Zamzam, was a great triumph to Abd al Muttalib. All other wells in Mecca were deserted, and this alone resorted to.* From it alone, Abd al Muttalib supplied the pilgrims; and the water

* The character of the water is a question of some curiosity and interest as bearing on the origin of the city. "It seems probable," says Burkhardt, "that the town of Mecca owes its origin to this well; for many miles round no sweet water is found; nor is there in any part of the country so copious a supply." *Travels in Arabia*, p. 145. Yet opinions vary so strangely as to its being fit for use that I can account for the contradictions only by the proverbial capriciousness of the taste for water. I will carefully note the authorities on the subject.

Bartema (1503 A. D.) says;—"In the myddest thereof (of a 'turret') is a well of three score and tenne cubites deepe; the water of this well is infected with saltpetre or saltnitre." *Burton*, vol. ii. p. 366.

Jos. Pitts (1680 A. D.) writes;—"Beer el Zem Zem, the water whereof they call holy water .... They report that it is as sweet as milk; but, for my part, I could perceive no other taste in it than in common water, except that it was somewhat brackish. The Hagges when they come first to Mecca drink of it unreasonably; by which means they are not only much purged, but their flesh breaks out all in pimples; and this they call the purging of their spiritual corruptions." *Ibid.* p. 392. He adds in a note,—"The worthy Mons. Therenot saith that the waters of Mecca are bitter; but I never found them so, but as sweet and good as any others, for aught as I could perceive." *Ibid.* p. 393.

Ali Bey says;—"The well is about seven feet eight inches in diameter, and fifty-six feet deep to the surface of the water." He adds that the water "is rather brackish and heavy, but very limpid. Notwithstanding the depth of the well, and the heat of the climate, it is hotter when first drawn up than the air .... *It is wholesome*, nevertheless, and so abundant that at the period of the pilgrimage, though there were thousands of pitchers full drawn, its level was not sensibly diminished." (vol. ii. p. 81).

The other wells in the city,—which he says he "examined particularly,"—"are all of the same depth; and the water is of the same temperature, taste, and clearness, as that of Zemzem." He therefore believes them all to originate in "one sheet," supplied by the filtration of rain water: but his testimony is mingled with some degree of religious fervour. The city wells he says "spring from the same source as the water of Zemzem; they have the same virtue in drawing down the divine favour and blessing as the miraculous well. God be praised for it!" *Ibid.* p. 98.

itself soon began to share in the sacredness of the Kaaba and its rites. The fame and influence of Abd al Muttalib now began

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But Sale on the authority of Edrísi, states that the springs of Mecca "are bitter and unfit to drink, except only the well Zemzem;" *Prel. Disc.* p. 4. And with this agrees the testimony of Burkhardt, who with reference to the former, writes;—"The well water is so brackish that it is used only for culinary purposes, except during the time of pilgrimage when the lowest class of Hadjys drink it." *Travels*, p. 106. When the conduit from Arafat is out of repair, then "during the pilgrimage sweet water becomes an absolute scarcity; a small skin of water (two of which a person may carry) being often sold for one shilling —a very high price among Arabs." *Ibid.* p. 107. The names of some of the wells and their diggers are mentioned by M. C. de Perceval, i. p. 262.

Burkhardt ascertained that the level of Zemzem continues the same even when there is the greatest drain on its waters, by comparing the length of the bucket-rope in the morning, and again in the evening. The Turks regard this as a miracle, as it is used not only by the multitudes of pilgrims, but by every family in the city, for drinking and ablution, though held too sacred for culinary purposes. He learned from one who had descended to repair the masonry "that the water was *flowing* at the bottom, and that the water is therefore supplied by a subterraneous rivulet. The water," he adds, "is heavy in its taste, and sometimes in its colour resembles milk, but *it is perfectly sweet*, and differs very much from that of the brackish wells dispersed over the town. When first drawn up, it is slightly tepid, resembling in this respect many other fountains in the Hejâz." *Travels*, p. 144. Elsewhere he says;—"however holy, its water is heavy to the taste and impedes digestion." *Ibid.* p. 106.

The testimony of Burton is strongly unfavourable. "To my taste," he says, "it was a salt-bitter, which was exceedingly disagreeable." Vol. ii. p. 393. And again;—"It is apt to cause diarrhœa and boils, and I never saw a stranger drink it without a wry face . . . .The flavour is a salt-bitter, much resembling an infusion of a tea-spoonful of Epsom salts in a large tumbler of tepid water. Moreover it is exceedingly "heavy" to the taste. For this reason Turks and other strangers prefer rain collected together in cisterns and sold for five farthings a gugglet." Vol. iii. p. 202, note.

Burton adds that as the water is carried by pilgrims in jars to distant quarters, any one may now-a-days judge of its taste for himself. But the flavour of stale water bottled up for months would not be a fair criterion of the same water freshly drawn. Ali Bey who bottled some of it describes "the interior surface" of the bottles as "completely covered with small bubbles of extremely subtile air, resembling the points of needles. When I shook the bottle, they mounted to the superior surface, or united themselves into one bubble of the size of a grey pea." Vol. ii. p. 81.

I have met with nothing to justify the verdict of Sale that it "cannot be drank for any continuance." *Prel. Disc.* p. 4.

to wax greater and greater; a large family of powerful sons added to his dignity; he became, and continued to his death, the virtual chief of Mecca.* Prosperity of Abd al Muttalib.

A strange calamity threatened to embitter his prosperity. During his early troubles, while supported by his only son Hârith, he had felt so strongly his weakness and inferiority in contending with the large and influential families of his opponents, as to vow that, if Providence should ever grant him ten sons, he would devote one of them to the Deity. Years rolled on, and the rash father at last found himself surrounded by the longed-for number, the sight of whom daily reminded him of his vow. He bade his sons accompany him to the Kaaba; each was made to write his name upon a lot, and the lots were made over to the Intendant of the temple, who cast them in the usual mode. The fatal arrow fell upon ABDALLAH, the youngest and the best beloved of Abd al Muttalib's sons. The vow devoting him to the Deity must needs be kept, but how else should it be fulfilled than by the sacrificial knife? His daughters wept and clung around the fond father, who was willingly persuaded to cast lots between Abdallah and ten camels, the current fine for the blood of a man. If the Deity should accept the ransom, the father need not scruple to spare his son. But the lot a second time fell upon Abdallah. Again, and with equal fortune, it was cast between him and twenty camels. At each successive trial Abd al Muttalib added ten camels to the stake, but the Deity appeared inexorably to refuse the vicarious offering, and to require the blood of his son. It was now the

His youngest son *Abdallah* ransomed from sacrifice by one hundred camels.

Upon the whole it may be concluded that the water though somewhat brackish and unpleasant to the taste of most who are unaccustomed to drink it, is *fit for use*.

* Sprenger considers that the Omeyad family had the pre-eminence. "It is certain that Harb, and after him Abu Sofiân, surpassed the family of Hâshim in wealth and influence, and that they were the chiefs of Mecca" (p. 31). Notwithstanding Sprenger's great authority, I believe Abd al Muttalib to have been the virtual chief of Mecca; after his death, there existed an equality among the several families; there was no real Chief over the whole city. "Sheba al Hamd, the same is Abd al Muttalib, was the Chief of the Coreish until his death." وكان سيد قريش حتى هلك *Kâtib al Wâckidi*, p. 14.

tenth throw, and the ransom had reached a hundred camels, when the lot at last fell upon them. The father joyfully released Abdallah from his impending fate; and taking a hundred camels slaughtered them between Safa and Marwa. The inhabitants of Mecca feasted upon them; and the residue was left to the beasts and to the birds; for Abd al Muttalib's family refused to taste of them. It was this Abdallah who became the father of the Prophet.*

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* The above account is from *Kâtib al Wâckidi*, p. 16. See also a paper in the *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, vii. i. p. 34. Abd al Muttalib had six daughters, and it was one of them who made the proposal to cast lots for the camels.

Wâckidi, however, gives another account, which is that commonly received. *Cnf. Hishâmi*, p. 24; *Tabari*, pp. 6–11; *M. C. de Perceval* vol. i. pp. 264–267; *Weil*, p. 8. According to this version, the Coreish held back Abd al Muttalib, just as he was about to plunge the knife into his son, and offered to give a ransom, but he would not listen; at last they persuaded him to refer the matter to a divineress at Kheibar, who indicated the plan of ransom described in the text. Whatever may have been the facts of the the case, they have been greatly over-coloured and distorted by tradition, so much so, that Sprenger has placed the entire incident in his legendary chapter, p. 56. I believe however the story to have *some* foundation of fact. It is difficult, indeed, to imagine an adequate motive for the *entire invention* of such a tale; because the Mahometans regard the vow as a sinful one, the illegality of which rendered it null and void. *Tabari*, p. 5. The incident was no doubt subsequently dressed up into its present romantic form; a resemblance was then pretended between it and Abraham's intended sacrifice of Ismael; and thus they make Mahomet to say that he was "the son of *two* sacrifices:" ابن ذبيحين But the simple desire to establish such an analogy, had there been *no* facts to found the story on, would have led to a very different fiction; for Abraham was *commanded* to offer up his son, and the Mahometans believe he acted piously in obeying; whereas they hold Abd al Muttalib, who was borne out by no such divine order, to have been wrong both in the vow, and in his attempt to fulfil it.

There appears, indeed, to be grave reason for doubting whether the vow was really to *immolate* a son, and whether it was followed by any actual attempt to put a sacrifice of human life into execution. Human sacrifices to the Deity, so far as native tradition enables us to form an opinion, were unknown in Mecca. The truth I suppose to be that Abd al Muttalib vowed that he would *devote* a son to Hobal. *Nadzar*, نذر, would probably be the word employed; and the idea of a son devoted to the service of God (a Nazarene) might have become known among the Arabs from its currency among

The prosperity and fame of Abd al Muttalib excited the envy of the house of Omeya, whose son Harb, following the example of his father,* challenged his rival to a trial of their respective merits. The Abyssinian king declined to be the umpire, and the judgment was committed to a Coreishite, who declared that Abd al Muttalib was in every respect the superior. Harb was deeply mortified,

Abd al Muttalib is unsuccessfully challenged by Harb son of Omeya.

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the Jews. But the custom, however natural to the Judaical system, would not mould itself to the spurious and idolatrous creed of the Kaaba. How was the devotion of a son to the service of God to be carried out at Mecca? The question was referred to the idol, who simply chose one of the sons. In this difficulty, recourse may have been had to a divineress, and by her direction to the oracle, in order that the victim might be ransomed. The warm imagination of the traditionists has conjured up a theatrical scene with the sacrificial knife, which it is probable never existed.

The sacrifice of human beings in Arabia was only *incidental;* where, as in the case of violent and cruel tyrants it is alleged to have been done *uniformly and on principle,* the authority seems doubtful. Of the former class, are the immolation of a Ghassânide prince to Venus by Mundzir, king of Hira; see above p. clxxviii. and *M. C. de Perceval,* vol. ii. p. 101; and the yearly sacrifice by the same prince on his "evil day," in expiation of the murder of two friends;" *ibid.* p. 104, *et seq.;* and *Pococke's Spec. History of Arabia,* p. 73. Of the second description, is the uncertain tale of one *Naaman* sacrificing men with his own hand to the deity, *Evagrius* vi. 21; and *Pococke's Spec.* p. 87; and the story of Porphyry that at Dumaetha (Dumat al Jandal?) κατ' ἔτος ἕκαστον παιδα ἐθυον. See two notes of Gibbon (chap. l.) on this subject. He appears to believe in the practice of human sacrifice in Arabia, but in refer- to the case before us, he adds with his usual discrimination: "the danger and escape of Abdallah is a tradition rather than a fact."

The allusions which we meet with to pre-islamite infanticide refer to its most ordinary form where children are killed to avoid the expense and trouble of rearing them, and in the case of female infants to the possibility in a barbarous country of their dishonour. Thus Zeid "the Enquirer" discouraged the killing of daughters, saying "I will *support* them." *Kâtib al Wâckidi,* p. 255. So Coran vi. 137, 151;—"and kill not your offspring *on account of poverty;* WE shall provide for them and for you." Also Sura xvii. 31, "And kill not your children *for fear of want;* WE shall provide for them and for you; verily the killing of them is a great wickedness."

The dislike of infant daughters and disappointment at their birth was connected with the same feelings as lead the Rajpoots of India to infanticide. See Sura lvi. 57–59: also lxxxi. 8, and Sale's note.

In the first pledge of Ackaba, the men of Medina bound themselves among other things "that they would not kill their children."

I can find no notice in tradition or elsewhere connecting the practice with immolation to the Deity or any religious rite.

* See above, p. ccl.

and abandoned the society of his opponent, whose companion he had previously been. Thus the ill feeling between the branches of Hâshim and Omeya was perpetuated and increased.*

Abd al Muttalib enters into league with the Bani Khozâa.

Abd al Muttalib gained an important increase of stability to his party by concluding a defensive league with the Khozâite inhabitants of Mecca.† They came to him and represented that, as their quarters adjoined, such a treaty would be advantageous for both parties. Abd al Muttalib was not slow in perceiving this. With ten of his adherents he met the Khozâites at the Kaaba, and there they mutually pledged their faith. The league was reduced to writing, and hung up in the Holy House. No one from the family of Omeya was present, or indeed knew anything of the transaction until thus published.‡ The combination was permanent, and in after times proved of essential service to Mahomet.

Abraha, the Abyssinian Viceroy, invades Mecca, 570 A.D.;

In the year 570 A.D., or about eight years before the death of Abd al Muttalib, occurred the memorable invasion of Mecca by Abraha the Abyssinian viceroy of Yemen.§ In the previous

* *Kâtib al Wâckidi*, p. 16; *Tabari*, p. 25; *Sprenger*, p. 31. Nofail, the umpire, was of the stock of the Bani Adi, and an ancestor of Omar. The story much resembles that of Hâshim's contest with Omeiya, and one is half tempted to think it may be a spurious re-production of it, the more strongly to illustrate the enmity of the two branches. But the suspicion is not sufficiently great to deprive the narrative of a place in our text. When Harb gave up the society of Abd al Muttalib, "he took up that of Abdallah ibn Jodâân of the branch of Taym, son of Murra," who will be mentioned farther below.

Another contest of a somewhat similar nature is related between Abd al Muttalib and a chief of Tâif, on account of a spring of water claimed by the former. A soothsayer, of the Bani Odzar in the south of Syria, decided in favour of Abd al Muttalib; but the story is accompanied by several marvellous and suspicious incidents. Thus on the journey northwards, a fountain of water gushes from a spot struck by the heel of Abd al Muttalib's camel, —an evident re-production of the legend of Abd al Muttalib's similar journey for the settlement of the claims of the Coreish against him.

† For the Khozâites see the preceding chap. p. cxcviii.

‡ *Kâtib al Wâckidi*, p. 15½; *Sprenger*, p. 31. There were present seven of the immediate family of Abd al Muttalib, Arcam, and two other grandsons of Hâshim.

§ The authorities are *Kâtib al Wâckidi*, pp. 16½–17, and *Hishâmi*, pp. 15–19. M. C. de Perceval has given the circumstances of this expe-

chapter* it has been related that Abraha built at Sanaa a magnificent cathedral; that the Arabs, jealous of an attempt to divert thither the pilgrimage of their tribes, treated despitefully his emissaries and even the building itself; and that the enraged viceroy resolved to attack Mecca and raze its temple to the ground. Upon this enterprise he set out with a considerable army. In its train was led an elephant;—a circumstance for Arabia so singular and remarkable, that the Commander, his host, the invasion, and the year, to this day are called by the name "of the Elephant."† A prince of the old Himyar stock, with an army of Arab adherents, was the first to oppose the advance of the Abyssinian. He was defeated, but his life was spared, and he followed the camp as a prisoner. Arrived at the northern limits of Yemen, Abraha was attacked by the Bani Khathâm, a tribe descended from Máadd,‡ under the command of Nofail; he too was discomfited, and escaped death only on condition of guiding the Abyssinian army. Thence the conqueror proceeded to Tâif, three days' march from Mecca; but its inhabitants, the Bani Thackîf, deputed men to say that they had no concern with the Kaaba which he had come to destroy and, so far from opposing the project, would furnish him with a guide.§ For this purpose they sent a man called Abu Rughâl, and the viceroy moved onwards. At Mughammis, between Tâif and Mecca, Abu Rughâl died; and centuries afterwards, the Meccans were wont to mark their abhorrence of the traitor by casting stones at his tomb as they passed.

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dition in more detail than the character of the traditions seems to warrant. Vol. i. pp. 268–279.

* p. clxiii.

† Wâckidi gives a tradition (p. 19) that there were thirteen elephants with the army, besides this famous one called Mahmûd; and that the latter was the only one that escaped death from the shower of stones. But this would seem to oppose the tenour of tradition generally on the subject. Wâckidi adds that Abraha sent to Abyssinia for the famous elephant Mahmûd expressly to join his expedition.

‡ See Table, chap. iii. p. cxcv.

§ They had an idol, *Lât*, of their own, which they honoured nearly in the same way as the Meccans did that at the Kaaba. *Hishâmi*, p. 16. They were always looked upon as jealous of the superior fame of Mecca and its shrine.

and prepares to destroy the Kaaba;

From Mughammis Abraha sent forward an Abyssinian with a body of troops to scour the Tehâma, and carry off what cattle they could find. They were successful in the raid, and among the plunder secured two hundred camels belonging to Abd al Muttalib. An embassy was then despatched to the inhabitants of Mecca;—"Abraha," its message ran, "had no desire to do them injury. His only object was to demolish the Kaaba; that performed, he would retire without shedding the blood of any." The Meccans had already resolved that it would be vain to oppose the the invader by force of arms; but the destruction of the Kaaba they refused upon any terms willingly to allow. At last the embassy prevailed on Abd al Muttalib and the chieftains of some of the other Meccan tribes* to repair to the viceroy's camp and there plead their cause. Abd al Muttalib was treated with distinguished honour. To gain him over, Abraha restored his plundered camels; but he could obtain from him no satisfactory answer regarding the Kaaba.† The chiefs who accompanied him

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* Of these the chiefs of the Bani Bakr and Hodzeil are mentioned. This Bani Bakr was not the tribe collateral with the Taghlibites, but the stock descended from Bakr, son of Abd Monât, son of Kinana, and nearly allied to the Coreish. See preceding chap. p. cxcvi.

† He is said to have descended from his throne and seated himself by Abd al Muttalib. But many of these details were probably invented by the traditionist to glorify the grand-father of the prophet. Abraha is said to have asked him what favour he could do him. Abd al Muttalib replied, "to restore to him his camels." The viceroy was mortified. "I looked upon thee," said he, "at first with admiration: but now thou askest as a favour the return of thine own property, and makest no solicitation regarding the Holy House which is thy glory, and the pillar of thine own religion and that of thy forefathers." Abd al Muttalib answered:—"Of the camels I am myself the Master, and therefore I asked for them: *as for the Kaaba, another is its Master who will surely defend it;** and to him I commit its defence." The speech of Abraha is convenient for the traditionists, as affording them an occasion to add Abd al Muttalib's prophetical defiance; but it is not the speech of a Prince who came to destroy the Kaaba, and whose object was to depreciate and not to extol it. The conversation is evidently fabricated.

* Compare the attack on the Delphian temple by the Persian army, (*Herod.* viii. 37); and by the Gauls under Brennus, (*Pausanias*, x. 23). On both occasions the Oracle declared that the god "was able to defend his own." The slaughter occasioned by the fire from heaven, and the falling of the rocks from Parnassus are also analogous points.

offered a third of the wealth of the Tehâma if he would desist from his designs against their temple, but he refused. The negotiation was broken off, and the chieftains returned to Mecca. The people, by the advice of Abd al Muttalib, made preparations for retiring in a body to the hills and defiles in the vicinity on the day before the expected attack. As Abd al Muttalib leaned upon the ring of the door of the Kaaba, he is said to have prayed to the Deity thus aloud;—"Defend oh Lord thine own House, and suffer not the Cross to triumph over the Kaaba!" This done, he relaxed his hold, and betaking himself with the rest to the neighbouring heights, watched what the end might be.*

but is discomfited by the pestilence.

Meanwhile a pestilential distemper had shown itself in the camp of the Viceroy. It broke out with deadly pustules and frightful blains, and was probably an aggravated form of small-pox. In confusion and dismay the army commenced its retreat. Abandoned by their guides, they perished among the valleys, and a flood (such is the pious legend) sent by the wrath of Heaven swept off multitudes into the sea. The pestilence alone is however a cause quite adequate to the effects described.† Scarcely any

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It is enough throughout the narrative to admit the main events without believing the details of every speech and conversation, as the effort is patent to magnify Abd al Muttalib, Mecca, and the Kaaba.

Some accounts represent Abd al Muttalib as gaining admittance to Abraha through Dzû Nafas, (the Himyar prince taken prisoner as noticed in the text, p. cclxiii.) whose friendship he had formed in his mercantile expeditions to Yemen. See *M. C. de Perceval*, vol. i. p. 214. It was on one of these expeditions that Abd al Muttalib is said to have learnt in Yemen to dye his hair black. The people of Mecca were delighted with his unexpectedly juvenile appearance, and the custom was thus introduced there. *Kâtib al Wâckidi*, p. 15½; *Sprenger*, p. 86. Wâckidi represents Abd al Muttalib as withdrawing from Mecca on Abraha's approach to Hirâ (Jebel Nûr, afterwards Mahomet's sacred retreat); and from thence letting loose his 200 recovered camels as devoted to the Deity, in the hope that some one of the enemy might injure them in the Tehâma, and the Deity be thereby prompted to revenge the insult upon the enemy's army.

* No doubt these events, too, are highly coloured by legendary growth or fiction, in order to cast a mysterious and supernatural air over the retreat of Abraha.

† No one appears to have pursued the retreating army. They sought Nofail to guide them back; but in the confusion he escaped to one of the

one recovered who had once been smitten by it; and Abraha himself, a mass of malignant and putrid sores, died miserably on his return to Sanâ.*

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surrounding heights, whence, it is pretended, he called out to the fugitives in these derisive lines;—

اين المفر و الاله الطالب * و الاشرم المغلوب ليس الغالب

"Whither away are ye fleeing, and no one is pursuing! Al Ashram (Abraha) is the vanquished one, not the vanquisher." *Hishâmi*, p. 18.

A contemporary poet, a Coreishite named Abdalla, son of Zibara, estimates the killed at the incredible number of 60,000, in these verses:—

ستون الفا لم يؤوبوا ارضهم * بل لم يعش بعد الاياب سقيمها

M. C. de Perceval, vol. i. p. 280.

* His body was covered with pustules and, as they dropped off, matter flowed forth followed by blood. "He became like an unfledged bird; and did not die until his heart separated from his chest." *Hishâmi*, p. 18. This is manifestly over-drawn.

The accounts of Wâckidi and Hishâmi leave no room to question the nature of the disease as having been a pestilential form of small-pox. Wâckidi, after describing the calamity in the fanciful style of the Coran, adds—

فكان ذلك اول ما كان الجدري و الحصبه و الشجار المرّه

"*And that was the first beginning of the small-pox, and the pustular disease, and a certain kind of bitter tree,* (p. 17). Similarly Hishâmi;— ان اول ما رائت الحصبه و الجدري بارض العرب ذلك العام و انه اول مارای مرایر الشجر الحرمل و الحنظل و العثر —(p. 19). The word الحصبه signifies likewise "small stones," and the name as applied to the small-pox is probably derived from the gravelly appearance and feeling of the hard pustules; such a feeling is believed to be common at some stages of the disease, so much so that the patient on setting his foot to the ground, feels as if he were standing on gravel. The name, coupled with this derivation, without doubt gave rise to the poetical description of the event in the Coran:—"*Hast thou not seen how thy Lord dealt with the army of the Elephant? Did he not cause their stratagem to miscarry? And he sent against them flocks of little birds, which cast upon them small clay stones, and made them like unto the stubble of which the cattle have eaten.*" *Sura* cv. —See above chap. i. p. lxxx. Canon III. B. This passage, as Gibbon well says, is "the seed" of the marvellous details given regarding Abraha's defeat.

Hishâmi describes the stones showered upon the enemy as being "like grains of corn and pulse,"— امثال الحمص و العدس —(p. 18); and

The unexpected and seemingly miraculous disappointment of the magnificent preparations of Abraha increased the reverence with which throughout Arabia the Coreish and other inhabitants of Mecca were regarded. They became vain-glorious, and sought to mark their superiority by the assumption of special duties and exemptions. "Let us," they said, "release ourselves from

The Meccans establish the *Homs* or ceremonial exceptions in their own favour.

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it is remarkable that the latter expression signifies also a species of deadly blain or pustule.

It would seem that not all who were struck, (or sickened,) died; for Ayesha says that she saw at Mecca the rider (*Mahout*) and the driver of the elephant (قايد الفيل و سايسه) both blind and begging food of the people; *Hishâmi*, p. 19. The story is the more likely as blindness is a very common effect of small-pox.

In certain ancient verses, said to have been written before the Hegira by Abu Cays a contemporary poet of Medîna, in order to stay the Coreish from doing violence to Mahomet, he enumerates God's mercies to them, and alludes thus to the repulse of Abraha, without any of the usual miraculous allusions. *Hishâmi*, p. 76.

فاما اتا كم نصر ذى العرش ردّهم * جنود المليك بين ساف و حاصب

فولوا سراعا هاربين و لم يؤب * اكى اهله ملجيش غير عصاب *

The other miraculous part of the story is, that when the army was about to advance upon Mecca, Nofail, the Khuthamite guide, whispered in the ear of the Elephant. It forthwith sat down, and no persuasion or compulsion would induce it to stir a step towards Mecca, while it would readily proceed in every other direction. The germ of this story lies in a saying of Mahomet's at Hodeibia. His camel sat down there fatigued; and as the place was at so convenient a distance from Mecca as to prevent a collision between the Meccans and his army, Mahomet took advantage of the circumstance and said:—"Nay! Al Caswa (that was his camel's name) is not fatigued; *but he that restrained the Elephant from advancing upon Mecca, the same hath held her back also.*" *Kâtib al Wâckidi*, p. 118½; *Hishâmi*, p. 321. Hence the traditionists invented a variety of stories illustrative of the manner in which God was supposed to have "held back the Elephant." Yet Mahomet's meaning seems to have been simply metaphorical:—"He who by his providence restrained the elephant, or the possessor of the elephant, from advancing upon Mecca, the same," &c. It is *possible* that the fable of the elephant's unwillingness to move against Mecca may have been current in Mahomet's time; but it is incomparably more likely to have been the fiction of the traditionists, growing out of this saying of Mahomet.

some of the observances imposed upon the multitude; and forbid ourselves some of the things which to them are lawful." Thus (says tradition) they gave up the yearly pilgrimage to Arafat, and the ceremonial return therefrom, although they still acknowledged those acts to be an essential part of the "religion of Abraham," and binding upon all others; they also denied themselves the use of cheese and butter while in the pilgrim garb; and, abandoning tents of camels' hair, restricted themselves to tents of leather. Upon pilgrims who came from beyond the sacred limits (*haram*), they imposed new rules for their own aggrandisement. Such visitors, whether for the greater or the lesser pilgrimage, were forbidden to eat food brought from without the sacred boundary; and were compelled to make the circuit of the Kaaba either naked, or clothed in vestments provided only by the Meccans who formed the league.* This association, called the HOMS, included the Coreish, the Bani Kinâna a collateral branch,† and the Khozâites. To them the privileges of the league were restricted. All others were subjected to the humiliation of soliciting from them food and raiment.‡

Proof of the strength and universality of the Meccan superstition,

There is some doubt as to whether these innovations were only now introduced or existed from an earlier period.§ Under any

* If persons of rank came as pilgrims, and no Meccan garments were available for them, they were permitted to go through the ceremony in their own vestments; but they were to cast them off immediately after, and never again to use them.

The common pilgrims, who could not get clothes, circumambulated the Kaaba entirely naked: the women with a single loose shift only.

† Including all the descendents of Kinâna; see preceding chap. p. cxcvi.; *Kâtib al Wâckidi*, p. 12½.

‡ The word *Homs*, says Wâckîdi, refers to something *new* added to a religion; *ibid.* Its etymological derivation seems to be the bringing into play a *fresh stringency* in the pilgrim ceremonial. Sprenger gives its meaning as the "alliance of certain tribes by religion," p. 36. But this was only an incidental feature in the imposition of the new practices, and would not appear to be the essential and original idea.

§ Hishâmi says, "I know not whether the Coreish introduced the innovation before or after the attack of Abraha," p. 43. The Secretary of Wâckidi places his account of the *Homs* league, under the chapter of Cossai, but he does not say that it was introduced in his time. He mentions the

circumstances they give proof that the Meccan superstition was active and vigorous, and that its directors exercised a wonderful influence over the whole of Arabia.* The practices then enforced were superseded only by Islam; and (adopting the latest date assigned for their introduction) they were maintained for more than half a century. The reverence for the Kaaba, which permitted the imposition of customs so unreasonable and oppressive, must necessarily have been grossly superstitious, as well as universally prevalent. But the effect of the innovations themselves was perhaps adverse to the Meccan system. If the pilgrimage were really of divine appointment, what human authority could grant a dispensation to relax any part of its observances? and, in a country where the decent morality of Judaism and Christianity was known and respected, what could be gained by the outrage of forcing the female sex publicly to circumambulate the Kaaba in an insufficient dress, and the men entirely naked? Here were points to which the Reformer might fairly take exception; and they would avail either as grounds for denouncing the entire superstition, or for insisting upon a return to the practices of a purer and more scrupulous age.† Elements of weakness.

practice *incidentally*, and rather in connection with the meaning of the word "Coreish," and as showing that they formed a portion of the league. Hence no certain chronological deduction can be drawn from the position of the narrative, such parenthetical episodes being often thus irregularly introduced in the Arabian histories. Sprenger does not therefore go upon sure ground when he quotes Wâckidi, as assigning the beginning of the custom to the era of Cossai; p. 36, note i. He supposes that the Homs practices being then introduced, were again *revived* in the year of the Elephant; but the supposition is unnecessary.

* I cannot understand on what principle Sprenger regards this league as a symptom of the declining power of the Meccan superstition, a vain effort which sought "a remedy in reforming the faith of the Haram, the last spark of the life of whose confederation seemed to be on the point of being extinguished," p. 36. The facts appear to convey a conclusion totally the reverse.

† Mahomet was not slow in availing himself of the last of these arguments. He abolished all the restrictions, as well as the relaxations, of the Homs league. The practices are indirectly reprobated in Sura ii., vv. 199-200, where he enforces the necessity of the pilgrimage to Arafat; and in Sura vii., vv. 28 and 32, where proper apparel is enjoined, and the free use of food

Position of parties in the latter days of Abd al Muttalib.

Let us now glance for a moment at the state of parties in Mecca towards the latter days of Abd al Muttalib.*

Low state of the descendants of Abd al Dâr.

There arose, as we have seen, upon the death of Cussai, two leading factions, the descendants respectively of his two sons, Abd al Dar and Abd Menâf. The former originally possessed all the public offices; but since the struggle with Hâshim about seventy years before, when they were stripped of several important dignities, their influence had departed, and they had now sunk

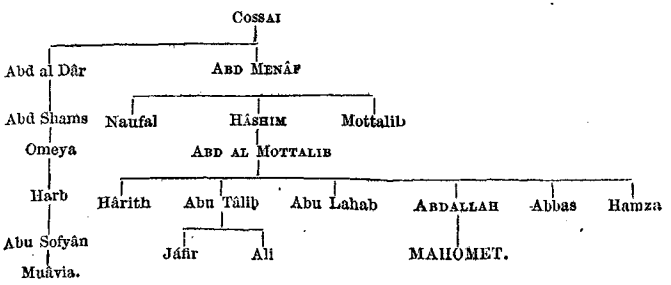
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and water. It is said that Mahomet himself, before he assumed the prophetical office, used to perform the pilgrimage to Arafat, thus disallowing the provisions of the association.

Besides the Homs, there were observed other superstitious practices, some of them with less likelihood said to be modern innovations. Such were the arbitary rules regarding the dedication of camels as hallowed and exempt from labour when they had come up to a certain standard of fruitfulness, with curious subsidiary directions as to their flesh being wholly illicit, or lawful to men only in certain circumstances, to women only in others. The dedicated mother camel was called *Sâiba*, (and in some cases *Wasîla*, which included goats or ewes); of the offspring of a single camel, the eleventh female was termed *Bahîra; Hâmi*, was the dedicated stallion. But Ibn Ishâc and Ibn Hishâm are not agreed on the details of these customs. It is pretended that Amr Ibn Lohay (in the third century A.D.; see preceding chap. pp. cxcviii. ccxii.) introduced the practice; but it no doubt grew up long before that time, and is founded as M. C. de Perceval says, in the affection of the Arabs for the camel, and their reverence for those animals which greatly added to the breed; vol. i. pp, 225-226; *Sale, Prel. Disc.* pp. 151–153; *Hishâmi*, pp. 29-30.

Mahomet inveighed strongly against these arbitrary "distinctions which God had not enjoined." See *Sura* V. v. 112; *Sura* VI. v. 144; *Sura* X. v. 5.

* The relation of the different branches, as well as the previous details of the present chapter, will be elucidated by the following table.



into a subordinate and insignificant position. The offices retained by them were still undoubtedly valuable, but they were divided among separate members of the family; the benefit of combination was lost; and there was no steady and united effort to improve their advantages towards the acquisition of social influence and political power.*

Prosperity of the descendants of Abd Menâf.

The virtual chiefship of Mecca was thus in the hands of the descendants of Abd Menâf. Amongst these, again, two parties had arisen; the families, namely, of his sons Hâshim and Abd Shams. The grand offices of giving of food and water to the pilgrims secured to the Hâshimites a commanding and a permanent influence under the able management of Hâshim, of Al Muttalib, and now of Abd al Muttalib. The latter, like his father Hâshim, was regarded as the chief of the Meccan Sheikhs. But the branch of Abd Shams, with their numerous and powerful connections, were jealous of the power of the Hâshimites, and repeatedly endeavoured to humble them, or to bring discredit on their high position. One office, that of the Leadership in war, was secured by the Omeyad family, and contributed much to its splendour. It was, moreover, rich and successful in commerce, and by some is thought to have exceeded in influence and power even the stock of Hâshim.†

The Hâshimites.

The Omeyads.

The birth of Mahomet.

But the "Year of the Elephant" had already given birth to a personage destined, within half a century, to eclipse the distinctions both of Hâshimite and Omeyad race. To the narration of this momentous event the succeeding chapter will be devoted.

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* The custody of the Holy House, the Presidency in the Hall of Council, and privilege in war of binding the banner on the staff,—the offices secured to the branch of Abd al Dar,—might all have been turned to important account if the advice of their ancestor Cossai had been followed. But division of authority, want of ability, and adverse fortune, all along depressed the family.

† *Sprenger's Life of Mohammed*, p. 31.

THE

BIOGRAPHY OF MAHOMET,

AND

RISE OF ISLAM.

CHAPTER FIRST.

The Birth and Childhood of Mahomet.

History of Mecca already traced to 570 A.D.

In the Introduction, I have traced the history of Mecca and the ancestors of Mahomet, from the earliest times of which we have any account, down to the famous *Year of the Elephant*, which marks the deliverance of the sacred city from the invading army of Abraha the Abyssinian viceroy of Yemen. Before proceeding farther, I propose briefly to describe Mecca, and the country immediately surrounding it.

Description of Mecca.

Position with reference to the sea coast, and Tâif.

Within the great mountain range which skirts the Red Sea, and about equi-distant by the caravan track from Yemen and the Gulph of Akaba, lies the holy valley. The traveller from the sea-shore, after a journey of about fifty miles, reaches it by an almost imperceptible ascent, chiefly through sandy plains and defiles hemmed in by low hills of gneiss

and quartz, which rise in some places to the height of 400 or 500 feet.* Passing Meccâ, and pursuing his eastward course, he proceeds with the same gentle rise between hills partly composed of granite through the valley of Minâ, and in five or six hours arrives at the sacred eminence of Arafat. Onwards the mountains ascend to a great height, till about eighty miles from the sea the granite peaks of Jebel Kora crown the range, and Tâif comes in sight thirty miles farther east. Between Jebel Kora and Tâif the country is fertile and lovely. Rivulets every here and there descend from the hills; the plains are clothed with verdure, and adorned by large shady trees. Tâif is famous for its fruits. The grapes are of a "very large size and delicious flavour." And there is no want of variety to tempt the appetite; for peaches and pomegranates, apples and almonds, figs, apricots and quinces, grow in abundance and perfection.† Far different is it with

Fertility of Tâif.

* *Burkhardt's Arabia*, pp. 58-62. The journey between Jedda and Mecca was performed by Burkhardt in nineteen hours on a camel. On another occasion he accomplished it upon an ass in thirteen hours. He calculates the distance at sixteen or seventeen hours walk, or about fifty-five miles from Jedda. Burton's estimate is less. He thus speaks of the journey:—"Allowing eleven hours for our actual march, those wonderful donkeys had accomplished between forty-four and forty-six miles, generally of deep sand, in one night." Vol. iii. p. 375.

For the character of the rocks, see *Burkhardt*, p. 62, and *Ali Bey*, vol. ii. p. 118.

† "Mecca is amply supplied with water melons, dates, limes, cucumbers, and other vegetables from Tâif and Wady Fatima.

the frowning hills and barren valleys for many a mile around Mecca. Stunted brushwood and thorny acacias occasionally relieve the eye, and furnish scanty repast to the hardy camel; but the general features are rugged rocks unrelieved by a trace of foliage, with sandy and stony glens from which the peasant in vain looks for the grateful returns of tillage. Even at the present day, after the riches of Asia have for twelve centuries been poured into the city, and a regular supply of water may be secured by a conduit from the fresh springs of Arafat, Mecca can hardly boast a garden or cultivated field, and only here and there a tree.* Sterility of Mecca.

During the pilgrimage season, the former place sends at least one hundred camels every day to the capital." *Burton*, vol. iii. p. 362, note. The description in the text is from Burkhardt.

* Burkhardt noticed a few acres to the north of the town "irrigated by means of a well, and producing vegetables," p. 127. Some trees also grow in the extreme southern quarter, where Burkhardt first took up his abode:—"I had here," he says, "the advantage of several large trees growing before my windows, the verdure of which, among the barren and sun-burnt rocks of Mecca, was to me more exhilarating than the finest landscape could have been under different circumstances," p. 101. But of the valley generally he says that it is "completely barren and destitute of trees;" and "no trees or gardens cheer the eye," pp 103, 104.

So Ali Bey:—"I never saw but one flower the whole of my stay at Mecca, which was upon the way to Arafat." Vol. ii. p. 99. Mecca "is situated at the bottom of a sandy valley, surrounded on all sides by naked mountains, without brook, river, or any running water; without trees, plants, or any species of vegetation." Vol. ii. p. 112. Again:—"The aridity of the country is such that there is hardly a plant to be seen near the city, or upon the

Valley of Mecca.

In the immediate vicinity of Mecca the hills are formed of quartz and gneiss; but a little to the east, grey strata of granite appear, and within one or two miles of the city, lofty and rugged peaks (as the Jabal Nûr or *Hirâ*,)* begin to shoot upwards in grand and commanding masses. The valley of Mecca is about two miles in length. The general direction and slope is from north to south; but at the upper or northern extremity, where the way

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neighbouring mountains....We may not expect to find at Mecca anything like a meadow, or still less a garden....They do not sow any grain, for the too ungrateful soil would not produce any plant to the cultivator. The soil refuses to yield even spontaneous productions, of which it is so liberal elsewhere. In short, there are but three or four trees upon the spot where formerly stood the house of Abu Taleb, the uncle of the prophet; and six or eight others scattered here and there. These trees are prickly, and produce a small fruit similar to the jujube, which is called nebbak by the Arabs." Vol. ii. p. 110.

And of its environs, Burkhardt writes:—"As soon as we pass these extreme precincts of Mecca, the desert presents itself; for neither gardens, trees, nor pleasure-houses line the avenues to the town, which is surrounded on every side by barren sandy valleys, and equally barren hills. A stranger placed on the great road to Tâif, just beyond the turn of the hill in the immediate neighbourhood of the sheriff's garden house, would think himself as far removed from human society, as if he were in the midst of the Nubian desert." p. 131. This he ascribes to indolence and apathy, seeing that water "can be easily obtained at about thirty feet below the surface." But there must, nevertheless, be some natural defect in the gravelly and sandy soil of Mecca, else the munificence of the Moslem rulers, and the notorious avarice of its inhabitants, would long ere this have planted trees and gardens for profit, if not to beautify the town.

* *Burkhardt*, p. 175, and note.

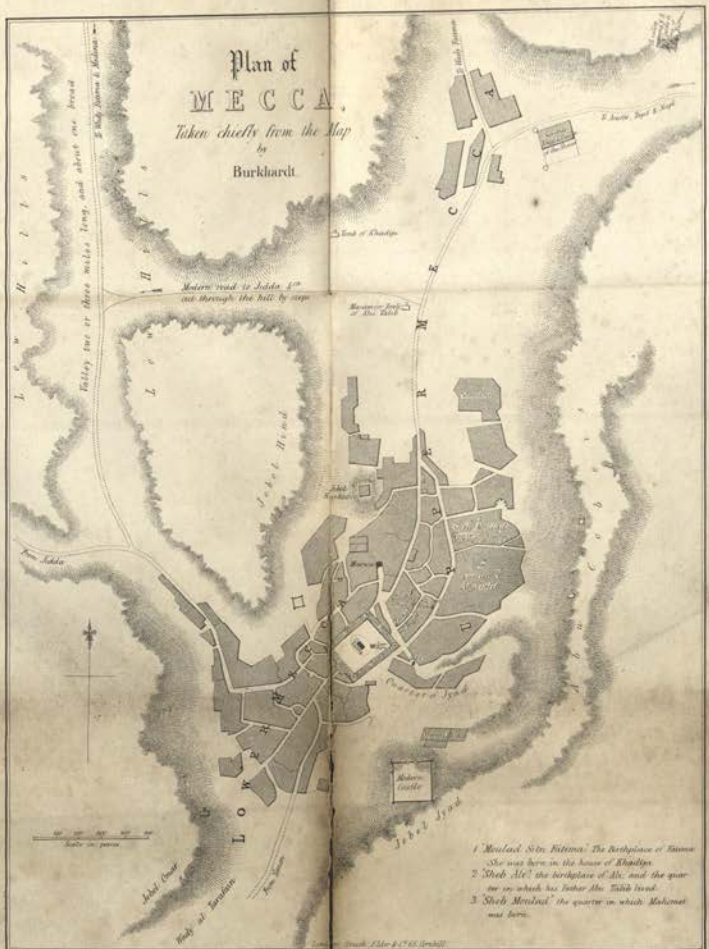
leads to Arafat and Tâif, it bends to the eastward; and at the southern or lower end, where the road branches off to Yemen, Jedda, and Syria, there is a still more decided bend to the west.* At the latter curve the valley opens out to a breadth of above half a mile, and it is in the spacious amphitheatre thus shut in by rocks and mountains, that the Kaaba, and the main portions of the city both ancient and modern, were founded. The surrounding rocks rise precipitously two or three hundred feet, and on the eastern side reach to a height of five hundred feet. It is here that the craggy defiles of *Abu Cobeis*, the most lofty of all the hills encircling the valley, overhang the quarter of the town in which Abd al Muttalib and his family lived. About three furlongs to the north-east of the Kaaba, the spot of Mahomet's birth is still pointed out to the pious pilgrim as the *Sheb Maulûd*, and hard by is the *Sheb Ali* (or quarter in which Ali resided), both built upon the declivity of the rock.†

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* The high road to Medîna and Syria takes this southerly circuit. A direct road has been made through a dip in the mountain to the north-west of the city. This is facilitated by steps cut out of the rock—a modern work, ascribed to one of the Barmecide family. See *Burkhardt*, p. 129; *Burton*, vol. iii. p. 144.

† The above details are taken from Burkhardt and Ali Bey, chiefly from the former, who thus describes the valley:—

"This town is situated in a valley, narrow and sandy, the main direction of which is from north to south; but it inclines towards the north-west near the southern extremity of the town. In


Plan of
MECCA,
Taken chiefly from the Map
by
Burkhardt.
Valley, two or three miles long, and about one broad
Modern road to Jedda 4th cut through the hill by steps
Jebel Hood
Jebel Ool
Jebel Tarudem
Wady el Tarudem
Jebel Jyad
Modern Castle
Scale in paces
1 'Moulad Sitt Fatima' The Birthplace of Fatima She was born in the house of Khadijeh
2 'Sheb Ali' the birthplace of Ali, and the quarter in which his father Abu Talib lived
3 'Sheb Mouled' the quarter in which Mahomet was born.

Climate. Though within the tropics, Mecca has not the usual tropical showers. The rainy season begins

breadth this valley varies from 100 to 700 paces; the chief part of the city being placed where the valley is most broad. In the narrower part are single rows of houses only, or detached shops. The town itself covers a space of about 1500 paces in length, from the quarter called El Shebeyka to the extremity of the Mala; but the whole extent of ground comprehended under the denomination of Mekka, from the suburb called Djeroucl (where is the entrance from Djidda) to the suburb called Moabede (on the Tayf road), amounts to 3,500 paces. The mountains enclosing this valley are from 200 to 500 feet in height, completely barren and destitute of trees. The principal chain lies on the eastern side of the town: the valley slopes gently towards the south, where stands the quarter called El Mesfale (the low place). The rain-water from the town is lost towards the south of Mesfale in the open valley named Wady el Tarafeyn. Most of the town is situated in the valley itself; but there are also parts built on the sides of the mountains, principally of the eastern chain, where the primitive habitations of the Koreysh, and the ancient town, appear to have been placed." *Burkhardt*, p. 103.

Ali Bey gives the "mean breadth" of the valley at 155 toises. The present town, he says, "covers a line of 900 toises in length, and 266 in breadth at its centre, which extends from east to west." Vol. ii. p. 94.

Burton writes:—"The site is a winding valley, on a small plateau, half-way below the Ghats." Its utmost length is two-and-a-half miles from the Mabádah (north) to the southern mount Jiyad; and three-quarters of a mile would be the extreme breadth between Abu Kubays eastward,—upon whose western slope the most solid mass of the town clusters,—and Jebel Hindi, westward of the city. In the centre of this line stands the Kaabah." Vol. iii. p. 320.

It is much to be regretted that Lieut. Burton has not employed his clear and graphic pen in giving us a more detailed account of Mecca. He excuses himself by saying that "Ali Bey and Burkhardt have already said all that requires saying." Yet variety of testimony is valuable: and such an account as he has given us of Medîna is still a desideratum.

about December. The clouds do not discharge their precious freight continuously or with regularity. Sometimes the rain descends with such excessive violence as to inundate the little valley with floods from Arafat. Even in the summer, rain is not unfrequent. The seasons are thus uncertain, and the horrors of continued drought are occasionally experienced. The heat, especially in the months of autumn, is oppressive.* The surrounding ridges intercept the zephyrs that would otherwise reach the close and sultry valley; the sun beats with violence on the bare gravelly soil, and reflects an intense and distressing glare. The native of Mecca, acclimated to the narrow vale, may regard with complacency its inhospitable atmosphere,† but the traveller, even in the depth of winter, complains of a stifling closeness and suffocating warmth.

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* Burkhardt says it is most severe from August to October. He mentions that "a suffocating hot wind pervaded the atmosphere for five successive days in September," p. 240. Ali Bey says—"It may be imagined how great must be the heat in summer, when in the month of January, with the windows open, I could scarcely endure the sheet of the bed upon me, and the butter at the same period was always liquid like water." Vol. ii. p. 112. Burton writes;—"The heat reverberated by the bare rocks is intense, and the normal atmosphere of an eastern town communicates a faint lassitude to the body, and irritability to the mind." Vol. iii. p. 319.

† Some years after the Hegira, the refugees began to long for their native Mecca, and some touching verses are preserved expressive of their fond affection for its sterile soil and the springs in its vicinity.

Fond veneration with which it is regarded by the Arabs.

Such is the spot, barren and unpromising though it be, on which the Arabs look with fond and superstitious reverence as the cradle of their Destiny, and the arena of the remote events which gave birth to their Faith. Here Hagar alighted with Ishmael, and paced with troubled steps the space between the little hill of Safâ (a spur of Abu Cobeis), and the eminence of Marwâ, an offshoot on the opposite side of the valley from the lower range of Keyckáân.* Here the Bani Jorhom established themselves upon the falling fortunes of the ancestors of the Coreish; and from hence they were expelled by the Bani Khozâa, the new invaders from the south. It was in this pent-up vale that Cossay nourished his ambitious plans, and, in the neighbouring defiles of Minâ, asserted them by a bloody encounter with the Bani Sûfa: and here he established the Coreish in their supremacy. It was hard by the Kaaba that his descendants, the children of Abd al Dâr and of Abd Menâf, were drawn up in battle array to fight for the sovereign prerogative. It was here that Hâshim exhibited his glorious liberality; and on this spot that Abd al Muttalib toiled with his solitary son till he discovered the ancient well of Zamzam. Thousands of such associations crowd

* Burton calls "Marwah a little rise like Safa in the lower slope of Abu Kubays." Vol. iii. p. 345. But in the plans both of Burkhardt and Ali Bey it would seem to be a spur from the range on the opposite side of the valley.

upon the mind of the weary pilgrim, as the minarets of the Kaaba rise before his longing eyes; and in the long vista of ages reaching even to Adam, his imagination pictures multitudes of pious devotees in every age and from all quarters of the globe, flocking to the little valley, making their seven circuits of the holy house, kissing the mysterious stone, and drinking of the sacred water. Well then may the Arab regard the fane, and its surrounding rocks, with awe and admiration.

Abdallah (born 545 A.D.) marries Amina.

At the period of Abraha's retreat from Mecca,* Abd al Muttalib, now above seventy years of age, enjoyed the rank and consideration of the foremost chief of Mecca. A few months previous to this event, he had taken his youngest son ABDALLAH,† then about four-and-twenty years of age, to the house of Wuheib, a distant kinsman descended from Zohra, brother of the famous Cossay; and there affianced him to AMINA the daughter of Wahb, brother of Wuheib, under whose guardianship she lived. At the same time Abd al Muttalib, not-

* By M. Caussin de Perceval's calculations, this event occurred in June 570 A.D.

† Abdallah, or *servant of God*, (corresponding with the Hebrew *Abdiel*,) was a name common among the ante-Mahometan Arabs. *Conf. C. de Perceval*, vol. i. p. 126, vol. ii. pp. 286, 434, 436. Mahomet's nurse, Halîma, was the daughter of a person called Abdallah, and had a son of the same name. *Vide Kâtîb al Wâckidi*, p. 28½.

withstanding his advanced age, bethought him of a matrimonial alliance on his own account, and married Hâlah the cousin of Amina and daughter of Wuheib. Of this late marriage, the famous Hamza was the first fruits.*

Death of Abdallah.

As was customary, when the marriage was consummated at the home of the bride, Abdallah remained with her there for three days.† Not long after, he set out during the pregnancy of his wife on a mercantile expedition to Ghazza (Gaza) in the south of Syria. On his way back he sickened at Medîna, and was left by the caravan there with his father's maternal relatives of the Bani

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* Hamza is said to have been four years older than Mahomet. *Vide Kâtib al Wâckidi*, p. 20, margin. This would either imply that Abdallâh was married at least four years to Amina before Mahomet's birth, which is not likely, and is opposed to the tradition of Amina's early conception; or that Abd al Muttalib married Hâlah at least four years before his son married Amina, which is also opposed to tradition. Wherefore, following the traditions regarding the simultaneous marriage of Abdallah and his father, we must hold that Hamza was not older than Mahomet.

† The absurd story (of which there are many versions inconsistent with one another) of a woman offering herself without success to Abdallâh while on his way to Wuheib's house, but declining his advances when he was returning thence because the prophetic light had departed from his forehead, falls under the Canon II. D. Some make this woman to be a sister of the Christian Waraca. Having heard from her brother tidings of the coming prophet, she recognized in Abdallah's forehead the prophetic light, and coveted to be the mother of the prophet. This fable perhaps gave rise to the later legend that many Meccan damsels died of envy the night of Abdallah's marriage.

Najjâr.* Abd al Muttalib, learning of Abdallah's sickness from his comrades, despatched his son Hârîth to take care of him. On reaching Medîna, Hârîth found that his brother had died about a month after the departure of the caravan, and was buried in the house of Nâbigha in the quarter of the Bani Adî. He returned with these tidings, and his father and brethren grieved sore for Abdallah. He was five and twenty years of age at his death, and Amina had not yet been delivered.† He left behind him five camels fed on wild shrubs,‡ a flock of goats, and a slave girl called *Omm Ayman* (and also *Baraka*), who tended the infant born by his widow. This little property, and the house in which he dwelt, were all the inheritance Mahomet received from his father; but, little as it was, the simple habits of the Arab required no more, and instead of being evidence of poverty the female

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* It will be remembered that Abd al Muttalib's mother, Salma, (Hâshim's wife,) belonged to Medîna, and to this tribe. See Introduction, chap iv. p. ccli. She was of the family Bani Adi mentioned below.

† This statement is from *Kâtib al Wâckidi*, p. 18. He mentions other accounts, such as that Abdallah went to Medîna to purchase dates; and that he died eighteen months (according to some, seven months) *after* Mahomet's birth. But he gives the preference to the version transcribed in the text.

‡ *Kâtib al Wâckidi*, p. 18½. خمس اجمال اؤاراك يعنى تاكل الاراك ,—that is to say, camels not reared and fed at home, and therefore of an inferior kind.

slave is rather an indication of prosperity and comfort.*

Amina delivered of a son, about the 20th August, 570 A.D.

Passing over, as fabulous and unworthy of credit, the marvellous incidents attending the gestation of the prophet and his first appearance in the world,†

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* See *Sprenger*, p. 81. The house was sold by a son of Abu Tâlib to one of the Coreish for twenty dinars. *Tabari.*

† The miracles attending the birth of Mahomet are very favorite topics with modern Moslems. See *exempli gratiâ*, the puerile tales from the *Maulûd Sharîf*, or *Ennobled Nativity*, in No. xxxiv. of the *Calcutta Review*, p. 404 *et. seq.* "Amina relates that she heard a fearful noise which cast her into an agony of terror, but immediately a white bird came, and laying its wing upon her bosom, restored her confidence;—she became thirsty, and anon a cup of delicious beverage, white as milk, and sweet like honey, was presented by an unseen hand;—heavenly voices and the tread of steps were heard around her, but no person was seen;—a sheet was let down from heaven, and a voice proclaimed that the blessed Mohammed was to be screened from mortal view;—birds of Paradise, with ruby beaks and wings of emerald, strutted along regaling her with heavenly warbling; persons from above scattered aromas around her, &c.

"No sooner was Mohammed born than he prostrated himself on the ground, and raising his hands, prayed earnestly for the pardon of his people, &c." His aunt Safia related six miraculous things:—1st. That he was born circumcised and with his navel cut. 2nd. In a clear voice the new born babe recited the creed. 3rd. The "seal of prophecy" was written on his back in letters of light, &c. "Three persons, brilliant as the sun, appeared from heaven. One held a silver goblet: the second an emerald tray: the third a silken towel; they washed him seven times; then blessed and saluted him with a glorious address as the "Prince of Mankind."

These tales, however implicitly believed by credulous Mahometans, are modern. The ancient biographies themselves, as might have been expected, are not free from absurd stories. The following are examples.

it suffices to state that the widowed Amina gave birth to a son in the autumn of the year 570 A.D. It is a vain attempt to fix with certainty the precise date of the birth, for the materials are too vague and discrepant to be subjected to so close a calcu-

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At the moment of Mahomet's birth, a light proceeded from Amina, which rendered visible the palaces and streets of Bostra, and the necks of the camels there. *Kâtib al Wâckidi*, p. 18½; *Hishâmi*, p. 30. This evidently originated in the mistaken application of some metaphorical saying, such as that "the light of Islam, which in after days proceeded from the infant now born, has illuminated Syria and Persia." It is remarkable that the honest but credulous Kâtib al Wâckidi leaves Hishâmi far behind in his relation of these miracles. His traditions make Mahomet as soon as born to support himself on his hands, seize a handful of earth, and raise up his head to heaven. He was born clean, and *circumcised*, whereat Abd al Muttalib greatly marvelled. So of Amina, it is said that she felt no weight or inconvenience from the embryo; that heavenly messengers came to her, and saluted her as the mother elect of him who was to be the prophet and lord of his people; that she was desired by them to call the child *Ahmed*; that alarmed by these visions she, by the advice of her female acquaintance, hung pieces of iron as charms on her arms and neck, &c. *Kâtib al Wâckidi*, p. 18. Sprenger infers from these traditions, that the mother had a weak and nervous temperament, inherited by her son. But I rather think that the traditions themselves should be discarded as utterly untrustworthy, both on account of the *period*, and the *subject matter* of which they treat. See Canons I. A, and II. D, in chapter i. of the Introduction.

One tradition makes Amina say, "I have had children, but never was the embryo of one heavier than that of Mahomet." The Secretary of Wâckidi (p. 18) rejects this tradition, because he says Amina never had any child except Mahomet; but its very existence is a good illustration of the recklessness of Mahometan traditionists.

lation. We may be content to know that the event occurred about fifty-five days after the attack of Abraha;* and may accept, as an approximation, the date of M. Caussin de Perceval (whose calculations have already been recommended for general acceptance), namely, the 20th of August, 570 A.D.†

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* *Kâtib al Wâckidi*, p. 18½.

† We know accurately the date of Mahomet's death, but we cannot calculate backwards with certainty even the *year* of his birth, because his life is variously stated as extending from sixty-three to sixty-five years: and, besides this, there is a doubt whether the year meant is a lunar, or a luni-solar one. See Introduction, chapter iii. p. xlix note.

The Arab historians give various dates, as the fortieth year of of Kesra's reign, or the 880th of the Seleucide Dynasty, which answers to 570 A.D.; others the forty-first, the forty-second, or the forty-third of Kesra's reign, that is the 881st, 882nd, or 883rd of the era of Alexander.

M. de Sacy fixes the date as the 20th of April A.D.571; on the assumption that the lunar year was always in force at Mecca. But he adds,—"En vain chercheroit-on à determiner l'epoque de la naissance de Mahomet d'une maniere qui ne laissât subsister aucune incertitude." See the question discussed by him p. 43, *et seq. Memoire des Arabes avant Mahomet, tome* xlviii. *Mem. Acad. Inscrip. et Belles Lettres.*

H. v. Hammer fixes on 569 A.D.; and Sprenger notes two dates as possible, viz. 13th April 571, and 13th May 567, A.D. (p. 74.)

The common date given by Mahometan writers is the 12th of Rabi I.; but other authorities give the 2nd, and others again the 10th of that month. *Kâtib al Wâckidi*, p. 18½. But it is scarcely possible to believe that the date could, under ordinary circumstances in Meccan society as then constituted, have been remembered with perfect accuracy.

No sooner was the infant born, than Amina sent to tell Abd al Muttalib. The messenger carrying the good tidings, reached the Chief as he sat in the sacred enclosure of the Kaaba, in the midst of his sons and the principal men of his tribe; and he rejoiced and rose up, and those that were with him. And he went to Amina, who told him all that had taken place. So he took the young child in his arms, and went to the Kaaba; and as he stood

Joy of Abd al Muttalib.

There are two points affecting the traditions on this head which have not attracted sufficient notice. The first is that *Monday* is by all traditionists regarded as a remarkable day in Mahomet's history, on which the chief events of his life occurred. Thus an old tradition:—"The prophet was born on a *Monday;* he restored to its place the black stone on a *Monday;* he assumed his prophetical office on a *Monday;* he fled from Mecca on a *Monday;* he reached Medîna on a *Monday;* he expired on a *Monday.*" *Tabari*, p. 214; *Kâtib al Wâckidi*, p. 37; *Hishâmi*, p. 173, marg. gloss. Nay, Wâckidi makes him to have been *conceived* on a Monday. *Kâtib al Wâckidi*, p. 18. This conceit no doubt originated in Mahomet's death, and one or two other salient incidents of his life, really falling on a Monday; and hence the same day was superstitiously extended backwards to unknown dates. When Monday was once fixed upon as the day of his birth, it led to calculations thereon (see *Sprenger*, p. 75 note,) and that again to a variety of date.

Secondly: something of the same spirit led to the assumption that the prophet was born in the same month and *on the same day of the month*, as well as of the week, on which he died. He died on Monday the 12th of *Rabi I;* and therefore the tradition which assigns Monday the 12th of Rabi I. as the day also of his birth is the most popular. But that such minutiæ as the day either of the month or week were likely to be remembered so long after especially in the case of an orphan, is inconsistent with Canon I. A, chapter i. of the Introduction.

The child is called *Mohammad.*

beside the holy house, he gave thanks to God. The child was called MOHAMMAD.*

Derivation of the name.

This name was rare among the Arabs, but not unknown. It is derived from the root *Hamd* [حمد] and signifies "The Praised." Another form is AHMAD, which having been erroneously employed as a translation of "*The Paraclete*" in some Arabic version of the New Testament, became a favorite term with Mahometans, especially in addressing Jews and Christians; for it was (they said,) the title under which the prophet had been in their books predicted.† Following the established usage of Christendom, I will style Mohammad MAHOMET.

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* The above is in the simple words of Wâckidi. *Kâtib al Wâckidi*, p. 19. Though some of the incidents are perhaps of late growth (as the visit to the Kaaba,) yet they have been in the text retained as at least possible. In the original are several palpable fabrications: as that Amina told Abdal Muttalib of her visions, and the command of the angel that the child should be called *Ahmad*. The prayer of Abd al Muttalib at the Kaaba is also apocryphal, being evidently composed in a Mahometan strain.

† It may be of some importance to show that the name was known and used in Arabia before Mahomet's birth. We have seen that his grandfather was called Sheba al *Hamd*, which is the same word. The form of *Ahmad* was very rare, but we find it in use among the Bani Bakr ibn Wâil, about thirty or forty years before Mahomet. *Vide M. C. de Perceval*, vol. ii. p. 378. We have a *Mohammad*, son of Sofiân, of the Tamîm tribe, born before 500 A.D. *Ibid*, p. 297. We meet also with a Mohammad of the tribe of Aws, born about 530 A.D. *Ibid*, Table vii. Among the followers of the prophet killed at Kheibar, we find a *Mahmud* ibn Maslama (elsewhere called *Mohammad* ibn Maslama,) whose name could not have had any connexion with that of

It was not the custom for the higher class of women at Mecca to nurse their own children. They procured nurses for them, or gave them out to nurse among the neighbouring Bedouin tribes, where was gained the double advantage of a robust frame, The infant was not nursed by his mother,

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Mahomet, he was also an Awsite. *Hishâmi*, p. 341; *Kâtib al Wâckidi*, p. 121. The Secretary, in a chapter devoted to the subject, mentions *five* of the same name before the prophet:—1. Mohammad ibn Khoáâzya, of the Bani Dzakwan, who went to Abraha, and remained with him in the profession of Christianity; a couplet by a brother of this man is quoted, in which the name occurs. 2. Mohammad ibn Saffin, of the Bani Tamîm. 3. Mohammad ibn Joshamî, of the Bani Suwâat. 4. Mohammad al Asiyadî. 5. Mohammad al Fockîmî. But with the usual Mahometan credulity and desire to exhibit anticipations of the prophet, the Kâtib al Wâckidi adds that these names were given by such Arabs as had learnt, from Jews, Christians, or Soothsayers, that a prophet so named was about to arise in Arabia; and the parents, in the fond hope each that his child would turn out to be the expected prophet, called it by his name! In the second instance this intelligence is said to have been imparted by a Christian bishop. *Kâtib al Wâckidi*, p. 32.

The word Ahmad must have occurred by mistake in some early Arabic translation of John's Gospel, for "the Comforter," περικλυτος for παρακλητος; or was forged as such by some ignorant or designing monk in Mahomet's time. Hence the partiality for this name, which was held to be a promise or prophecy of Mahomet.

The Secretary of Wâckidi has a chapter devoted to the titles of the prophet. Among these are ماحی عاقب حاشر خاتم. The last of these means "Obliviator," or "Blotter out:" and is thus interpreted و اما الماحی فان الله ماحا به سیّات من اتبعه "Because God blots out through him the sins of his followers:" or,—as farther explained,—"blots out through him unbelief." *Kâtib al Wâckidi*, p. 191½.

and the pure speech and free manners of the desert.*

but for a few days by Thueiba;

The infant Mahomet, shortly after his birth, was made over to Thueiba, a slave woman of his uncle Abu Lahab, who had lately nursed Hamza.† Though he was suckled by her for a very few dâys, he retained in after life a lively sense of the connection thus formed. Both Mahomet and Khadîja were wont to express in grateful terms their respect for her. Mahomet himself offered to her regularly gifts of clothes and other presents until the seventh year of the Hegira, when, upon his return from

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* Burkhardt states that this practice is common still among the Shereefs of Mecca. At eight days old the infant is sent away and, excepting a visit at the sixth month, does not return to his parents till eight or ten years of age. The Bani Hodheil, Thakîf, Coreish, and Harb, are mentioned as tribes to which the infants are thus sent; and (which is a singular evidence of the stability of Arab tribes and customs,) to these is added the *Bani Saád*, the very tribe to which the infant Mahomet was made over. *Burkhardt's Travels*, pp. 229-231. This is corroborated by Burton; vol. ii. p. 308, vol. iii. p. 49. Weil assigns another reason for this practice, viz., the anxiety of the Meccan mothers, by avoiding nursing, to have large families, and to preserve their constitutions, (p. 24, note 7.)

† Foster-relationship was regarded by the Arabs as a very near tie, and therefore all those are carefully noted by the biographers who had been nursed "*with Mahomet*," (or as Sprenger puts it, "with the same milk.") Ali, when at Medîna, proposed to Mahomet that he should marry Hamza's daughter, and praised her beauty to him; but Mahomet refrained, saying that a daughter of his foster-brother was not lawful for him. *Kâtib al Wâckidi*, p. 20.

Kheibar, tidings were brought of her death. Then Mahomet enquired after her son Masrûh, his foster-brother; but he too was dead, and she had left no relatives.*

and then entrusted to Halîma, a woman of the Bani Saád.

After Thueiba had suckled the child for several days,† a party of the Bani Saád (a tribe of the Bani Hawâzin,‡) arrived at Mecca with ten women who offered themselves as nurses for the Meccan infants. They were soon provided with children, excepting Halîma, who was at last with difficulty persuaded to take the infant Mahomet; for it was to the father that the nurses chiefly looked for a liberal reward, and the charge of the orphan child had been already declined by the party. The

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* These pleasing traits of Mahomet's character will be found at p. 20 of the Kâtib al Wâckidi. It is added that Khadîja sought to purchase Thueiba that she might set her at liberty, but Abu Lahab refused. After Mahomet had fled from Mecca, Abu Lahab himself set her free; and the credulous traditionists relate that on this account he experienced a minute remission of his torments in hell.

† So Wâckidi لبن p. 20. Weil (p. 25, note 8) adduces traditions, but apparently not good ones, for a longer period. If the nurses used (as is said) to come to Mecca twice a year in *spring* and in *harvest*, they must have arrived on the present occasion in autumn, not long after the date which I have adopted as that of Mahomet's birth.

‡ Descended from Khasafa, Cays, Aylân, Modhar, and Maádd, and therefore of the same origin as the Coreish. See Introduction, chapter iii. p. cxcv.

legends of after days have encircled Halîma's journey home with a halo of miraculous prosperity, but this it does not lie within my province to relate.*

Mahomet remains among the Bani Saâd till five years old.

The infancy, and part of the childhood of Mahomet, were spent with Halîma and her husband,† among the Bani Saâd. At two years of age she weaned him and took him to his home. Amina was so delighted with the healthy and robust appearance of her infant, who looked like a child of double the age, that she said,—"take him with thee back again to the desert; much do I fear for him the unhealthy air of Mecca." So Halîma returned with him to her tribe. When another two years were

* For example, Amina said to the nurse that for three successive nights she had been told in a vision that one of the family of Abu Dzueib was destined to nurse her infant; when, to her astonishment, Halîma replied, *that is my husband's name!* Neither Halîma nor her camel had any milk for her own child on the journey to Mecca; but, no sooner had she received the infant Mahomet, than she had abundance for both, and so had the camel. Her white donkey could hardly move along on the road to Mecca for weakness; but on the way home it outstripped all the others, so that their fellow travellers marvelled exceedingly. It was a year of famine, yet the Lord so blessed Halîma, for the little Mahomet's sake, that her cattle always returned fat and with plenty of milk, while those of every other person in the tribe were lean and dry:—and many other such stories. See the legend as given by *Sprenger*, p. 143; *Kâtib al Wâckidi*, p. 20½; and *Hishâmi* (who here indulges more in the marvellous than the Secretary,) p. 31.

† The Kâtib al Wâckidi makes the husband's name Abu Dzueib (p. 20½), but some call him Hârith, and name Halîma's Abu Dzueib.

ended, some strange event occurred to the boy which greatly alarmed his nurse. It was probably a fit of epilepsy; but Mahometan legends have invested it with so many marvellous features, that it is difficult to discover the real facts.* It is certain that the

Is seized with a fit.

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* The following is the account of Wâckidi, who is more concise than the other biographers on the subject:—"When four years of age, he was one morning playing with his (foster) brother and sister among the cattle, close by the encampment. And there came two angels who cut open his body and drew forth from thence the *black drop*, and cast it from them, and washed his inside with water of snow from a golden platter. Then they weighed him against a thousand of his people, and he out-weighed them all: and the one of them said unto the other—"let him go, for verily if thou wert to weigh him against the whole of his people, he would out-weigh them all." His (foster) brother seeing this, ran screaming to his mother, who with her husband hastene to the spot and found the lad pale and affrighted." *Kâtîb al Wâckidi*, p. 20½.

Hishâmi and other later writers add that her husband concluded that he had "had a fit,"—مصيب!—and advised her to take him home to his mother. Arrived at Mecca, she confessed after some hesitation what had occurred. "Ah!" exclaimed Amina, "didst thou fear that a devil had possessed him?"—أ فتخوفت عليه لشيطان!—She proceeded to say that such could never be the case with a child whose birth had been preceded and followed by so many prodigies, and recounted them in detail. Then she added, "leave him with me and depart in peace, and heaven direct thee!" From this Sprenger rightly concludes (p. 78) that according to Hishâmi the child did not return with Halîma; but Wâckidi explicitly states the reverse.

This legend is closely connected with Sura xciv. v. 1. "Have WE not opened thy breast?"—*i.e. given thee relief.* These words were afterwards construed literally into an actual opening, or

apprehensions of Halîma and her husband were aroused; for Arab superstition was wont to regard the subject of such ailments as under the influence of an evil spirit. They resolved to rid themselves of the charge, and Halîma carried the child back to its mother. With some difficulty, Amina obtained from her an account of what had happened, calmed her fears, and entreated her to resume the care of her boy. Halîma loved her foster-child, and was not unwillingly persuaded to take him once more to her encampment. There she kept him for about a year longer, and watched him so closely that she would not suffer him to move out of her sight. But uneasiness was again excited by fresh symptoms of a suspicious nature; and she set out finally to restore the boy to his mother, when he was about five years

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splitting up, of his chest; and, coupled with other sayings of Mahomet as to his being cleansed from the taint of sin, were wrought up into the story given above.

It is possible, also, that Mahomet may have himself given a more developed nucleus for the legend, desiring thereby to enhance the superstitious attachment of his people, and conveniently referring the occasion of the cleansing and its romantic accompaniments to this early fit. But we cannot, with any approach to certainty, determine whether any and if so what part of the legend, owes its paternity to Mahomet directly; or whether it has been entirely fabricated out of the verse of the Coran referred to, and other metaphorical assertions of cleansing, construed literally.

Other traditions hold that his chest was opened, and his heart cleansed, by the angels as above described, in adult life close by the Kaaba. It is enough to have shown what appears to be the origin of these mythical stories.

of age.* As she reached the outskirts of Mecca, the little Mahomet strayed, and she could not find him. In her perplexity she repaired to Abd al Muttalib, and he sent one of his sons to aid her in the search; the little boy was discovered wandering in Upper Mecca, and restored to his mother.†

Advantages gained by Mahomet by his early residence among the Bedouins.

If we are right in regarding the attacks which alarmed Halîma as fits of a nervous or epileptic nature, they exhibit in the constitution of Mahomet the normal marks of those excited states and ecstatic

* When Halîma took back the child to Mecca after its first attack, she told Amina that nothing but sheer necessity would make her part with it:— انا لا نردہ الا دل جمع انفنا *Kâtib al Wâckidi*, p. 20½. After some persuasion she took him back with her, and kept him close in sight. But she was again startled (as the legend goes) by observing a cloud attendant upon the child, sheltering him from the sun, moving as he moved, and stopping when he stopped. This alarmed her— فا فزعها ذلک ایضا من امرہ If there be any truth in the tradition, it probably implies a renewal of symptoms of the former nature.

It appears extremely probable that these legends originated in some species of fact. One can hardly conceive their fabrication *out of nothing*, even admitting that the 94th Sura, and other metaphorical expressions, may have led to the marvellous additions.

I have given in the text what appears to me the most probable narrative: but it must be confessed that the ground on which we here stand is vague and uncertain.

† *Kâtib al Wâckidi*, p. 20½ and 21. Hishâmi makes the person who found him to be the famous Waraca; but Wâckidi represents Abd al Muttalib as sending one of his grandsons to the search. The latter also gives some verses purporting to be Abd al Muttalib's prayer to the deity at the Kaaba to restore the child; but they appear to be apocryphal.

swoons which perhaps suggested to his own mind the idea of inspiration, as by his followers they were undoubtedly taken to be evidence of it. It is probable that, in other respects, the constitution of Mahomet was rendered more robust, and his character more free and independent, by his five years' residence among the Bani Saád. At any rate his speech was thus formed upon one of the purest models of the beautiful language of the Peninsula; and it was his pride in after days to say,—"Verily, I am the most perfect Arab amongst you; my descent is from the Coreish, and my tongue is the tongue of the Bani Saád."* When his eloquence began to form an important element towards his success, a pure language and an elegant dialect were advantages of essential moment.

Mahomet's grateful remembrance of Halîma's nursing.

Mahomet ever retained a grateful impression of the kindness he had experienced as a child among the Bani Saád. Halîma visited him at Mecca after his marriage with Khadîja. "It was" (the tradition runs) "a year of drought, in which much cattle perished; and Mahomet spake to Khadîja, and she gave to Halîma a camel used to a litter, and forty sheep; so she returned to her people." Upon another occasion he spread out his mantle for her to sit upon,

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* انا اعربكم انا من قريش و لسانى لسان بنى سعد ابن بكر
Kâtib al Wâckidi, p. 21; *Hishâmi*, p. 34. Sprenger translates the opening verb: "I speak best Arabic," (p. 77); but it has probably a more extensive signification.

—a token of especial respect,—and placed his hand upon her in a familiar and affectionate manner.* Many years after when, on the expedition against Tâif, he attacked the Bani Hawâzin and took a multitude of them captive, they found ready access to his heart by reminding him of the days when he was nursed among them.† About the same time a woman called Shîma (by others Judâma) was brought in with some other prisoners to the camp. When they threatened her with their swords, she declared that she was the prophet's foster-sister. Mahomet enquired how he should know the truth

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* فبسط لها رداه و ادخل يده فى ثيابها و وضعها على صدرها و قضى حاجتها *Kâtib al Wâckidi*, p. 21. It is added that Abu Bakr and Omar treated her with equal honor, omitting however the actions of familiar affection referred to in the extract just quoted; but to what period this refers is not apparent; for she could hardly have survived to their Caliphate. Indeed she appears to have died before the taking of Mecca and siege of Tâif.

Modern tradition makes her tomb to be in the cemetery of Al Backî at Medîna, which seems improbable. *Burton*, vol. ii. p. 308.

† *Kâtib al Wâckidi*, pp. 21, 131; *Hishâmi*, p. 379. The deputation from the Bani Hawâzin contained Mahomet's foster uncle Abu Tharwân. Pointing to the enclosure in which the captives of their tribe were pent up, they said:—"*There* are imprisoned thy (foster) relatives, thy aunts both maternal and paternal, thy nurses, and those that have fondled thee in their bosom. And we have suckled thee from our breasts. Verily we have seen thee a suckling, and never a better suckling than thou; and a weaned child, and never a better weaned child than thou; and we have seen thee a youth and never a better youth than thou," &c. And the heart of Mahomet was touched.

of this, and she replied:—"Thou gavest me this bite upon my back, once upon a time when I carried thee on my hip." The prophet recognized the mark, spread his mantle over her, and made her to sit down by him. He gave her the option of remaining in honour and dignity with him, but she preferred to return with a present to her people.*

In his sixth year his mother takes him to Medîna 575-6 A.D.

The sixth year of his life Mahomet spent at Mecca under the care of his mother. When it was nearly at an end she planned a visit to Medîna, where she longed to show her boy to the maternal relatives of his father. So she departed with her slave girl Omm Ayman (Baraka,) who tended the child; and they rode upon two camels.† Arrived in Medîna, she alighted at the house of Nâbigha, where her husband had died and was buried. The visit was of sufficient duration to imprint the scene and the society upon the memory of the juvenile Mahomet. He used in later days to call to recollection things that happened on this occasion. Seven and forty years afterwards when he entered Medîna as a refugee, he recognized the lofty quarters of the

Reminiscenses of the visit.

* *Kâtib al Wâckidi*, p. 20½; *Hishâmi*, p. 379. It is added "the Bani Saád say that he also gave her a male and a female slave; and that she united them in marriage, but they left no issue."

† The number of the party is not stated; but there would be one if not two camel drivers, and perhaps a guide besides.

Bani Adî, and said—"In this house I sported with Aynasa, a little girl of Medîna; and with my cousins, I used to put to flight the birds that alighted upon the roof." As he gazed upon the mansion, he added,—"here it was my mother lodged with me; in this very place is the tomb of my father; and it was there, in that well,* of the Bani Adî, that I learnt to swim."

Death of Amina, and return of Mahomet to Mecca.

After sojourning at Medîna about a month, Amina bethought her of returning to Mecca, and set out in the same manner as she had come. But when she had reached about half way a spot called Abwâ, she fell sick and died; and she was buried there. The little orphan was carried upon the camels to Mecca by his nurse Baraka (Omm Ayman) who, although then quite a girl, was a faithful nurse to the child, and continued to be his constant attendant.

Impression produced by his mother's death.

The early loss of his mother, around whom his constant heart and impressible affections had entwined themselves, no doubt imparted to the youthful Mahomet something of that pensive and meditative character by which he was afterwards distinguished. In his seventh year he could appreciate the bereavement, and feel the desolation of his orphan state. In the Coran he has alluded touchingly to the subject. While re-assuring his heart of the divine favour, he recounts the mercies of the Almighty; and amongst them the first is this,—"*Did he not*

* Or pond.

Grief on visiting her tomb in after-life.

find thee an orphan, and furnished thee with a refuge?"* On his pilgrimage from Medîna to Hodeibia he visited his mother's tomb, and he lifted up his voice and wept, and his followers likewise wept around him. And they asked him concerning it, and he said,—"This is the grave of my mother: the Lord hath permitted me to visit it. And I sought leave to pray for her, but it was not granted. So I called my mother to remembrance, and the tender memory of her overcame me, and I wept."†

Abd al Muttalib undertakes the charge of the orphan A.D. 576.

The charge of the orphan was now undertaken by his grandfather Abd al Muttalib, who had by this time reached the patriarchal age of four-score

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* Sura xciii. v. 6.

† The whole of this account is from the *Kâtib al Wâckidi*, p. 21½; where is added the following tradition:—"After the conquest of Mecca, Mahomet sat down by his mother's tomb, and the people sat around him, and he had the appearance of one holding a conversation with another. Then he got up, weeping; and Omar said, *Oh thou to whom I would sacrifice father and mother! Why dost thou weep?* He replied:—*This is the tomb of my mother: the Lord hath permitted me to visit it, and I asked leave to implore pardon for her, and it was not granted; so I called her to remembrance; and the tender recollection of her came over me, and I wept.* And he was never seen to weep more bitterly than he did then." But Wâckidi's Secretary says this tradition is a mistake; for it supposes the tomb of Mahomet's mother to be in Mecca, whereas it is at Abwâ. The prohibition, however, against praying for his mother's salvation is given in other traditions, and seems well supported. It forms a singular instance of the sternness and severity of the dogmas of Mahomet in respect of those who died in ignorance of the faith.

years. The child was treated by him with singular fondness. A rug used to be spread under the shadow of the Kaaba, and on it the aged chief reclined in shelter from the heat of the sun. Around the carpet, but at a respectful distance, sat his sons. The little Mahomet was wont to run close up to the patriarch, and unceremoniously take possession of his rug; his sons would seek to drive him off; but Abd al Muttalib would interpose saying, "Let my little son alone," stroke him on the back, and delight to watch his childish prattle. The boy was still under the care of his nurse Baraka; but he would ever and anon quit her, and run into the apartment of his grandfather even when he was alone or asleep.*

Abd al Muttalib dies 578 A.D.

The guardianship of Abd al Muttalib lasted but two years, for he died eight years after the attack of Abraha, at the mature old age of four score years and two. The orphan child felt bitterly the loss of his indulgent grandfather;† as he followed the bier to the cemetery of Hajûn, he was seen to weep; and

* *Hishâmi*, p. 35; *Kâtib al Wâckidi*, p. 22. Many incidents are added to the narrative, taken evidently from the point of view of later years. Thus Abd al Muttalib says:—"*Let him alone for he has a great destiny, and will be the inheritor of a kingdom;*"—انه ليونس ملكا.—Wâckidi adds the injunction which the nurse Baraka used to receive from the patriarch;—*Beware lest thou let him fall into the hands of the Jews and Christians, for they are looking out for him, and would injure him!*

† *Kâtib al Wâckidi*, p. 22, where it is said that Mahomet was eight years of age, when his grandfather died eighty-eight years

when he grew up, he retained a distinct remembrance of his death. The gentle, warm, and confiding heart of Mahomet was thus again rudely wounded, and the fresh bereavement was rendered more poignant by the dependent position in which it left him. The nobility of his grandfather's descent, the deference with which his voice was listened to throughout the vale of Mecca, and his splendid liberality in discharging the annual offices of providing the pilgrims with food and drink, were witnessed with satisfaction by the thoughtful child; and when they had passed away, we may believe that they left behind them a proud remembrance, and formed the seed perhaps of many an ambitious thought, and many a day-dream of power and domination.

Loss to the family of Hâshim occasioned by the death of Abd al Muttalib.

The death of Abd al Muttalib left the children of Hâshim (his father) without any powerful head; while it enabled the other branch, descended by Omeya from Abd Shams, to gain an ascendancy. Of the latter family the chief at this time was Harb, the father of Abu Sofiân, who held the *Leadership* in war, and was followed by a numerous and powerful body of relations.

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old. Others make Abd al Muttalib to have been 110, and some even 120, years old at his death. M. C. de Perceval has shown the futility of these traditions, which would make the patriarch to have begotten Hamza at an age of above 100 years. Vol. i. p. 290, note 4.

Of Abd al Muttalib's sons, Harith the eldest was now dead; the chief of those who survived were Zobeir* and Abu Tâlib (both by the same mother as Abdallah the father of Mahomet,) Abu Lahab, Abbâs, and Hamza. The two last were very young. Zobeir was the oldest, and to him Abd al Muttalib bequeathed his dignity and offices.† Zobeir, again, left them to Abu Tâlib; who, finding himself too poor to discharge the expensive and onerous task of providing for the pilgrims, waived the honor in favour of his younger brother Abbâs. But the family of Hâshim had fallen from its high estate; for Abbâs was able to retain only the *Sickâya* (or giving of drink), while the *Rifâda* (or furnishing of food) passed into the rival branch descended from Noufal son of Abd Menâf.‡ Abbâs was rich, and

The sons of Abd al Muttalib.

Abu Tâlib and Abbâs.

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* *Kâtib al Wâckidi*, p. 17.

† *Ibid.* and p. 15½. Zobeir evidently held a high rank at Mecca, but how long he survived is not apparent. Wâckidi says of him—"he was a poet, and of noble rank, and Abd al Muttalib made him his heir:"—و لان شاعرا و شريفا و اليه اوصى عبدالمطلب

‡ Hishâmi states only that Abbâs inherited the *Sickâya*, (p. 35); and subsequent history gives proof that he held nothing more. The authority for holding that the branch of Noufal possessed the Rifâda is given by M. C. de Perceval as derived from D'Ohsson. I have not succeeded in tracing it to any early Arabic writer. Abbâs did not inherit the *Sickâya* till Zobeir's death, when he would be old enough to manage it. M. C. de Perceval makes him suceeed to it immediately after Abd al Muttalib's death; but this is opposed to tradition as well as probability, for he was then only twelve years of age.

his influential post, involving the constant charge of the well Zam-zam, was retained by him till the introduction of Islam, and then confirmed to his family by the prophet; but he was not a man of strong character, and never attained to a commanding position at Mecca. Abu Tâlib on the other hand, possessed many noble qualities, and won greater respect; but, whether from poverty, or other cause, he too remained in the back ground. It was thus that in the oscillations of phylarchical government, the prestige of the house of Hâshim had begun to wane, and nearly disappear; while a rival branch was rising to importance. This phase of the political state of Mecca began with the death of Abd al Muttalib, and continued until the conquest of the city by Mahomet himself.

Abu Tâlib undertakes the guardianship of Mahomet.

To his son Abu Tâlib, the dying Abd al Muttalib consigned the guardianship of his orphan grandchild; and faithfully and kindly did Abu Tâlib discharge the trust. His fondness for the lad equalled that of Abd al Muttalib.* He made him sleep by his bed,

* *Kâtib al Wâckidi*, p. 22. The disposition to magnify the child is as manifest here as before. There is added this marvellous incident, connected with Abu Tâlib's scanty means, that the family always rose from their frugal meal hungry and unsatisfied if Mahomet were not present; but when he dined with them, they were not only satisfied, but had victuals to spare. The other children used to run about with foul eyes and dishevelled hair, whereas the little Mahomet's head was always sleek and his eyes clean. There thus appears so continuous a tendency to glorify

eat by his side, and go with him whenever he walked abroad. And this tender treatment he continued until Mahomet emerged from the helplessness of childhood.*

Mahomet at twelve years of age accompanies Abu Tâlib on an expedition to Syria 582 A.D.

It was during this period that Abu Tâlib, accompanied by Mahomet, undertook a mercantile journey to Syria. He intended to leave the child behind, for he was now twelve years of age, and able to take care of himself. But when the caravan was ready to depart, and Abu Tâlib about to mount his camel, his nephew, overcome by the prospect of so long a separation, clung to his protector. Abu Tâlib was moved, and carried the boy along with him. The expedition extended to Bostra, perhaps farther. It lasted for several months, and afforded to the young Mahomet opportunities of observation, which were not lost upon him. He passed near to Petra, Jerash, Ammon, and other ruinous sites of former mercantile grandeur; and the sight, no doubt, deeply imprinted upon his reflective mind the instability of earthly greatness. The wild story of the valley of Hejer, with its lonely deserted habitations hewn out

Impressions probably excited by this journey.

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the nascent prophet, that it becomes hard to decide which of these statements to accept as facts, and which to reject. *Vide* Canons I. C. and II. D. in Chap. i. of the Introduction.

* The reason given for Mahomet being entrusted to Abu Tâlib, is, that his father Abdallah was brother to Abu Tâlib by the same mother. *Tabari*, p. 59; but so was Zobeir also.

of the rock, and the tale of divine vengeance against the cities of the plain over which now rolled the billows of the Dead Sea, would excite apprehension and awe; while their strange and startling details, rendered more tragic by Jewish tradition and local legend, would win and charm the childish heart, ever yearning after the marvellous. On this journey too, he passed through several Jewish settlements, and came in contact with the national profession of Christianity in Syria. Hitherto he had witnessed only the occasional and isolated exhibition of the faith: now he saw its rites in full and regular performance by a whole community; the national and the social customs founded upon Christianity; the churches with their crosses, images, or pictures, and other symbols of the faith; the ringing of bells; the frequent assemblages for worship. The reports, and possibly an actual glimpse, of the continually recurring ceremonial, effected, we may suppose, a deep impression upon him; and this impression would be rendered all the more practical and lasting by the sight of whole tribes, Arab like himself, converted to the same faith, and practising the same observances. However fallen and materialized may have been the Christianity of that day in Syria, it must have struck the thoughtful observer in favorable and wonderful contrast with the gross and unspiritual idolatry of Mecca. Once again, in mature life, Mahomet visited

Syria,* and whatever reflections of this nature were then awakened would receive an augmented force,

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* The account of this journey is given by all the biographers, with many ridiculous details anticipative of Mahomet's prophetical dignity. The following is the gist of them:—

The youthful Mahomet, with the rest of the caravan, alighted under a tree by the roadside, close to a monastery or hermitage occupied by a monk called Bahîra. The monk perceived by a cloud which hovered over the company, by the boughs bending to shelter one of them, and by other marvellous tokens, that the party contained the prophet expected shortly to arise. He therefore invited them to an entertainment. But when they had assembled, he perceived that the object of his search was not amongst them. Upon his enquiring where the wanting guest was, they sent out for Mahomet, who on account of his youth had been left to watch the encampment. Bahîra questioned him, examined his body to discover the seal of prophecy, and found it plainly impressed upon his back. He then referred to his sacred books, found all the marks to correspond, and declared the boy to be the expected apostle. He proceeded to warn Abu Tâlib against the Jews, who he said would at once recognize the child as the coming prophet, and out of jealousy seek to slay him. Abu Tâlib was alarmed, and forthwith set out for Mecca with his nephew.

The fable contains so many absurdities as to excite contempt and mistrust for traditional collections everywhere abounding in such tales. A clue to the religious principle which engendered them may perhaps be found in Canon II. G. chap. i. of the Introduction.

Dr. Sprenger thinks that Abu Tâlib sent back Mahomet *under charge of Bahîra* to Mecca (*Life*, p. 79); and grounds his deduction on the phrase,— ردّه ابوطالب معه —at p. 22½ of *Wâckidi*. But this expression may equally signify, "Abu Tâlib took him back *with himself*" to Mecca; and this meaning is undoubtedly the one intended.

The subject has been discussed in the *Zeitschrift der deutschen morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, vol. iii. p. 454, and vol. iv.

and a deeper colouring, from the vivid pictures and bright imagery which, upon the same ground, had been impressed on the imagination of childhood.

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pp. 188, 457,—where Professors Fleischer and Wüstenfeld oppose Dr. Sprenger's view. Dr. Sprenger has written a reply in the *Asiatic Society's Journal* for 1853; where he has given in original the various authorities bearing upon the point. I. *Tirmidzi* says that Aub Tâlib sent Mahomet back from Syria by Abu Bakr and Bilâl; which (as Sprenger shows) is absurd, seeing that the former was two years *younger* than Mahomet, and the latter not then born. II. *Hishâmi* makes Abu Tâlib himself return with Mahomet, after concluding his business at Bostra. III. The *Kâtib al Wâckidi* gives several traditions:—*One* in which the monk, immediately after warning Abu Tâlib to make Mahomet return without loss of time to Mecca, expires; and the *Second*, that quoted above, upon which Dr. Sprenger so much relies. *Kâtib al Wâckidi*, p. 22½. But he has omitted a *Third* detailed account of the journey, which is given in the same volume, on the authority of Muhammad ibn Omar, *i.e.* Wâckidi himself. It is full of marvellous statements, and ends with distinctly saying that Abu Tâlib returned to Mecca with Mahomet. و رجع به ابوطالب —*Kâtib al Wâckidi*, p. 29. This may have escaped Dr. Sprenger's notice, as it occurs under another chapter in Wâckidi, *i.e.* the "Marks of Prophecy in Mahomet." So also *Tabari*, p. 60;— فخرج به عمه سريعا .

But Dr. Sprenger goes further. He suspects that the monk not only accompanied Mahomet to Mecca, but *remained* there with him. And as he finds the name *Bahîra* in the list of a deputation from the Abyssinian king to Mahomet forty years afterwards at Medîna, he concludes the two to have been one and the same person; and he thinks that the early Mahometan writers *endeavoured to conceal the fact*, as one discreditable to their prophet. The conjecture is ingenious, but the basis on which it rests appears to me wholly insufficient. It is besides inconsistent with the general character of the early traditionists, who reverentially preserved every trait of the Prophet handed down to them. Facts, no doubt,

No farther incident of a special nature is related of Mahomet, until he had advanced from childhood to youth.*

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were sometimes omitted, and stories died out, but on different grounds. See Canon II. L. in Chap. i. in the Introduction.

Some Arabs will have it that this monk was called Jergis (*Georgius*). Christian apologists call him Sergius.

* Weil states that in his sixteenth year Mahomet journeyed to Yemen with his uncle Zobeir, on a mercantile trip, (p. 69). Dr. Sprenger (p. 79, note 3) says that there is no good authority for this statement, and I cannot find any original authority for it at all. The expression with respect to Abu Tâlib,—و كان لا تسافر سفرا الا كان معه —"that he never undertook a journey, unless Mahomet were with him," might *possibly* imply that he undertook several journeys; but in the absence of any express instance, it cannot be held alone to be sufficient proof that he did. So it is said that "Abu Tâlib never took him again upon a journey, after this Syrian expedition, fearing lest injury should befal him,"—ورجع به ابو طالب فما خرج به سفرا بعد ذلك خوفا عليه —*Kâtib al Wâckidi*, p. 29. But the sentence is a mere pendant to the absurd story of the Jews recognizing in Mahomet the coming prophet, and seeking to lie in wait for his life, and therefore carries no weight. The chief reason for supposing that this was Mahomet's only mercantile journey (besides the one subsequently undertaken for Khadîja,) is that, had he undertaken any other, we should indubitably have had many special notices of it in Wâckidi, Hishâmi, and Tabari. Their silence can only be accounted for on the supposition that there was no other journey.


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